ALCIPHRON:

A NEW Turks

OR, THE

MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

IN

SEVEN DIALOGUES.

Containing an Apology for the Christian Religion, against those who are called Free-thinkers.

VOLUME the SECOND.

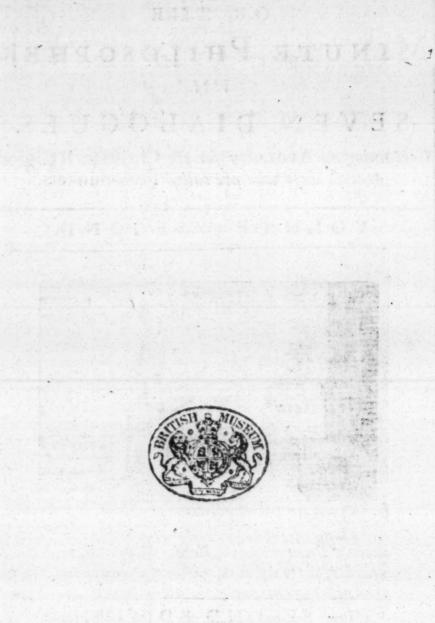


The Balances of Deceit are in his Hand. Hosea. xii. 7. Τὸ Εξαπατά Τζ αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὐτε πάνων χαλεπώτατον. Plato.

The SECOND EDITION.

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THE

MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

I. Points agreed. II. Sundry Pretences to Revelation. III. Uncertainty of Tradition. IV. Object and Ground of Faith. V. Some Books disputed, others evidently spurious. VI. Style and Composition of Holy Scripture. VII. Difficulties occurring therein. VIII. Obscurity not always a Defect. 1X. Inspiration neither impossible nor absurd. X. Objections from the Form and Matter of Divine Revelation, confidered. XI. Infidelity an Effect of Narrowness and Prejudice. XII. Articles of Christian Faith not unreasonable. XIII. Guilt the natural Parent of Fear. XIV. Things unknown, reduced to the Standard of what Men know. XV. Prejudices against the Incarnation Vol. II.

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HE following Day being Sunday, our Philosophers lay long in Bed, while the rest of us went to Church in the neighbouring Town, where we dined at Euphranor's, and after Evening

ing Service returned to the two Philoso-DIAL phers, whom we found in the Library. They told us, That, if there was a God, he was present every where, as well as at Church; and that if we had been ferving him one way, they did not neglect to do as much another; inafmuch as a free Exercise of Reason must be allowed the most acceptable Service and Worship, that a rational Creature can offer to its Creator. However, faid Alciphron, if you, Gentlemen, can but folve the Difficulties which I shall propose tomorrow Morning, I promife to go to Church next Sunday. After some general Conversation of this Kind, we sate down to a light Supper, and the next Morning affembled at the same Place as the Day before: where being all feated, I obferved, that the foregoing Week our Conferences had been carried on for a longer Time, and with less Interruption than I had ever known, or well could be, in Town: where Mens Hours are fo broken by Visits, Business, and Amusements, that whoever is content to form his Notions from Conversation only, must needs have

them very shattered and imperfect. And

what have we got, replied Alciphron, by

all these continued Conferences? For my

part, I think my felf just where I was,

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DIAL. with respect to the main Point that divides VI. us, the Truth of the Christian Religion. I answered: That so many Points had been examined, discussed, and agreed between him and his Adversaries, that I hoped to fee them come to an intire Agreement in the end. For in the first Place, said I, the Principles and Opinions of those who are called Free-thinkers, or Minute Philosophers, have been pretty clearly explained. It hath been also agreed, That Vice is not of that Benefit to the Nation, which some Men imagine: That Virtue is highly useful to Mankind: But that the Beauty of Virtue is not alone sufficient to engage them in the Practice of it: That therefore the Belief of a God and Providence ought to be encouraged in the State, and tolerated in good Company, as a useful Notion. Further, it hath been proved that there is a God: That it is reafonable to worship him: And that the Worship, Faith, and Principles prescribed by the Christian Religion have a useful Tendency. Admit, replied Alciphron, addressing himself to Crito, all that Dion faith to be true: Yet this doth not hinder my being just where I was, with respect to the main Point. Since there is nothing in all this that proves the Truth of the Christian Religion: Though each of those Parles

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Particulars enumerated may, perhaps, pre-DIAL.

judice in its favour. I am therefore to VI.

fuspect my self at present for a prejudiced

Person; prejudiced, I say, in sayour of
Christianity. This, as I am a Lover of
Truth, puts me upon my Guard against
Deception. I must therefore look sharp,
and well consider every Step I take.

II. CRI. You may remember, Alciphron, you proposed for the Subject of our present Conference the Consideration of certain Difficulties and Objections, which you had to offer against the Christian Religion. We are now ready to hear and consider whatever you shall think fit to produce of that Kind. Atheism, and a wrong Notion of Christianity, as of something hurtful to Mankind, are great Prejudices; the Removal of which may difpose a Man to argue with Candor, and submit to reasonable Proof: But the removing Prejudices against an Opinion, is not to be reckoned prejudicing in its favour. It may be hoped therefore, that you will be able to do justice to your Cause, without being fond of it. ALC. O Crito! that Man may thank his Stars to whom Nature hath given a fublime Soul, who can raise himself above popular Opinions, and, looking down on the Herd of Man-B 3 kind, VI. face of the whole Earth, divided and subdivided into numberless Nations and
Tribes, differing in Notions and Tenets, as
in Language, Manners, and Dress. The
Man who takes a general View of the World
and its Inhabitants, from this lofty Stand,
above the Reach of Prejudice, seems to
breathe a purer Air, and to see by a clearer
Light: But how to impart this clear and
extensive View to those who are wandering beneath in the narrow dark Paths of
Error! This indeed is a hard Task:
yet, hard as it is, I shall try if by any
means,

Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti.

Lucret.

Know then, that all the various Casts or Sects of the Sons of Men have each their Faith, and their religious System, germinating and sprouting forth from that common Grain of Enthusiasin, which is an original Ingredient in the Composition of Humane Nature. They shall each tell of Intercourse with the invisible World, Revelations from Heaven, divine Oracles, and the like. All which Pretensions, when I regard with an impartial Eye, it is impossible I should assent to all, and I find within

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within my felf fomething that withholds DIAL. me from affenting to any of them. For VI. although I may be willing to follow, fo far as common Sense and the Light of Nature lead; yet the same Reason, that bids me yield to rational Proof, forbids me to admit Opinions without Proof. This holds in general against all Revelations whatfoever. And be this my first Objection against the Christian in particular. CRI. As this Objection supposes there is no Proof or Reason for believing the Christian Revelation; if good Reason can be affigned for fuch Belief, it comes to nothing. Now I presume you will grant, the Authority of the Reporter is a true and proper Reason for believing Reports: And the better this Authority, the juster Claim it hath to our Affent: But the Authority of God is on all Accounts the best; Whatever therefore comes from God, it is most reasonable to believe.

III. ALC. This I grant, but then it must be proved to come from God. CRI. And are not Miracles, and the Accomplishments of Prophecies, joined with the Excellency of its Doctrine, a sufficient Proof that the Christian Religion came from ALC. Miracles, indeed, would prove fomething: But what Proof have

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DIAL. we of these Miracles? CRI. Proof of VI. the same Kind that we have or can have of any Facts done a great way off, and a long time ago. We have authentic Accounts transmitted down to us from Eye-Witnesses, whom we cannot conceive tempted to impose upon us by any Humane Motive whatfoever: inafmuch as they acted therein contrary to their Interests, their Prejudices, and the very Principles in which they had been nursed and educated. These Accounts were confirmed by the unparallel'd Subversion of the City of Jerusalem, and the Disperfion of the Jewish Nation, which is a standing Testimony to the Truth of the Gospel, particularly of the Predictions of our Bleffed Saviour. These Accounts. within less than a Century, were spread throughout the World, and believed by great numbers of People. These same Accounts were committed to Writing, translated into several Languages, and handed down with the fame Respect and Consent of Christians in the most distant Churches. Do you not fee, faid Alciphron, staring full at Crito, that all this hangs by Tradition? And Tradition. take my Word for it, gives but a weak Hold: It is a Chain, whereof the first Links may be stronger than Steel, and yet

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the last weak as Wax, and brittle as DIAL. Glass. Imagine a Picture copied succes- VI. fively by an hundred Painters, one from another; how like must the last Copy be to the Original! How lively and distinct will an Image be, after an hundred Reflexions between two parallel Mirrours! Thus like, and thus lively do I think a faint vanishing Tradition, at the End of fixteen or feventeen hundred Years. Some Men have a false Heart, others a wrong Head: and where both are true, the Memory may be treacherous. Hence there is still something added, something omitted, and fomething varied from the Truth: And the Sum of many fuch Additions, Deductions, and Alterations, accumulated for several Ages, doth, at the Foot of the Account, make quite another Thing. CRI. Ancient Facts we may know by Tradition, oral or written: And this latter we may divide into two Kinds, private and public, as Writings are kept in the Hands of particular Men, or recorded in public Archives. Now all these three Sorts of Tradition, for ought I can fee, concur to attest the genuine Antiquity of the Gospels. And they are strengthened by collateral Evidence from Rites instituted, Festivals observed, and Monuments erected by ancient Christians, such as Churches,

I

DIAL. Churches, Baptisteries, and Sepulchres. Now, allowing your Objection holds against oral Tradition, fingly taken, yet I can think it no fuch difficult Thing to transcribe faithfully. And Things once committed to Writing, are secure from Slips of Memory, and may with common Care be preferved intire fo long as the Manuscript lasts: And this, Experience shews may be above a thousand Years. The Alexandrine Manuscript is allowed to be above twelve hundred Years old: and it is highly probable there were then extant Copies four hundred Years old. A Tradition, therefore, of above fixteen hundred Years, need have only two or three Links in its Chain. And these Links, notwithstanding that great length of Time, may be very found and intire. Since no reasonable Man will deny, that an ancient Manuscript may be of much the same Credit now, as when it was first written. We have it on good Authority, and it feems probable, that the primitive Chriftians were careful to transcribe Copies of the Gospels and Epistles for their private Use: and that other Copies were preserved as public Records, in the feveral Churches throughout the World: and that Portions thereof were constantly read in their Assemblies. Can more be said to prove

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prove the Writings of Classic Authors, or DIAL. ancient Records of any kind authentic? VI. Alciphron, addressing his Discourse to Euphranor, said, It is one Thing to silence an Adversary, and another to convince him. What do you think, Euphranor? EUPH. Doubtless it is, ALC. But what I want, is to be convinced. EUPH. That Point is not so clear. ALC. But if a Man had ever so much mind, he cannot be convinced by probable Arguments against Demonstration. EUPH. I grant he cannot.

IV. ALC. Now it is as evident as Demonstration can make it, that no Divine Faith can possibly be built upon Traditi-Suppose an honest credulous Countryman catechised and lectured every Sunday by his Parish-Priest: alt is plain he believes in the Parson, and not in God. He knows nothing of Revelations, and Doctrines, and Miracles, but what the Priest tells him. This he believes, and this Faith is purely humane. If you fay he has the Liturgy and the Bible for the Foundation of his Faith, the Difficulty fill recurs. For as to the Liturgy, he pins his Faith upon the civil Magistrate, as well as the Ecclesiastic: neither of which can pretend Divine Inspiration.

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DIAL. Then for the Bible, he takes both that and his Prayer-Book on Trust from the Printer, who, he believes, made true Editions from true Copies. You fee then Faith, but what Faith? Faith in the Priest, in the Magistrate, in the Printer, Editor, Transcriber, none of which can with any Pretence be called Divine. I had the Hint from Cratylus: it is a Shaft out of his Quiver, and, believe me, a keen one. EUPH. Let me take and make trial of this same Shaft in my Hands. Suppose then your Countryman hears a Magistrate declare the Law from the Bench, or suppose he reads it in a Statute Book. What think you, is the Printer or the Justice the true and proper Object of his Faith and Submission? Or do you acknowledge a higher Authority whereon to found those loyal Acts, and in which they do really terminate? Again, suppose you read a Passage in Tacitus that you believe true; would you fay you affented to it on the Authority of the Printer or Transcriber rather than the Historian? ALC. Perhaps I would, and perhaps I would not. I do not think my felf obliged to answer these Points. What is this but transferring the Question from one Subject to another? That which we confidered was neither Law nor profane History,

Hinges

hat History, but religious Tradition, and Di-DIAL. the vine Faith. I fee plainly what you aim VI. Ehen at, but shall never take for an Answer to one Difficulty, the starting of another. the CRI. O Alcipbron, there is no taking ter, hold of you who expect that others should can (as you were pleased to express it) hold I fair and stand firm, while you plucked out naft their Prejudices: How shall he argue een with you but from your Concessions, and ake how can he know what you grant except nds. you will be pleased to tell him? EUPH. s a But to fave you the Trouble, for once I the will suppose an Answer. My Question tute admits but of two Answers: take your nter Choice. From the one it will follow, that by a Parity of Reason we can easily conyou ceive, how a Man may have Divine Faith, eon though he never felt Inspiration or faw a ich Miracle: inafmuch as it is equally possible ose for the Mind, through whatever Conduit, bel to oral or scriptural, Divine Revelation be deanrived, to carry its Thought and Submiffion up'to the Source, and terminate its LC. Faith, not in Humane but Divine Authould to rity: not in the Instrument or Vessel of Conveyance, but in the great Origin it but felf as its proper and true Object. From ubthe other Answer it will follow, that you onane introduce a general Scepticism into Humane Knowledge, and break down the ory,

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DIAL. Hinges on which civil Government, and VI. all the Affairs of the World turn and depend: in a Word that you would deftroy Humane Faith to get rid of Divine. And how this agrees with your professing that you want to be convinced, I leave you to consider.

V. ALC. I should in earnest be glad to be convinced one Way or other, and come to some Conclusion. But I have so many Objections in store, you are not to count much upon getting over one. Depend on it you shall find me behave like a Gentleman and Lover of Truth. I will propose my Objections briefly and plainly, and accept of reasonable Answers as fast as you can give them. Come, Euphranor, make the most of your Tradition: you can never make that a constant and universal one, which is acknowledged to have been unknown, or at best disputed in the Church for several Ages: And this is the Case of the Canon of the New Testament. For though we have now a Canon, as they call it, settled; yet every one must see and own that Tradition cannot grow stronger by Age; and that what was uncertain in the primitive Times cannot be undoubted in the subsequent. What say you to this, Euphranor? EUPH. I should be and and devine.
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be glad to conceive your Meaning clear-DIAL. ly before I return an Answer. It seems to me this Objection of yours supposeth that where a Tradition hath been constant and undisputed, such Tradition may be admitted as a Proof; but that where the Tradition is defective, the Proof must be fo too. Is this your Meaning? ALC. It is. EUPH. Consequently the Gospels and Epistles of Saint Paul, which were univerfally received in the Beginning, and never fince doubted of by the Church, must, notwithstanding this Objection, be in reason admitted for genuine. And if these Books contain, as they really do, all those Points that come into Controversy between you and me; what need I difpute with you about the Authority of some other Books of the New Testament, which came later to be generally known and received in the Church? If a Man affents to the undisputed Books he is no longer an Infidel: though he should not hold the Revelations, or the Epistle of Saint James or Jude, or the latter of Saint Paul, or the two last of Saint John to be The additional Authority of Canonical. these Portions of Holy Scripture may have its Weight, in particular Controverfies between Christians, but can add nothing to Arguments against an Infidel as fuch.

DIAL. fuch. Wherefore, though I believe a subsequent Age might clear up what was obscure or dubious in a Foregoing, and that good Reasons may be affigned for receiving these Books, yet those Reasons feem now beside our Purpose. When you are a Christian it will be then Time enough to argue this Point. And you will be the nearer being so, if the Way be shorten'd by omitting it for the present. ALC. Not so near neither, as you perhaps imagine: For, notwithstanding all the fair and plaufible Things you may fay about Tradition, when I confider the Spirit of Forgery which reigned in the primitive Times, and reflect on the feveral Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, attributed to the Apostles, which yet are acknowledged to be spurious, I confess I cannot help suspecting the whole. EUPH. Tell me, Alciphron, do you suspect all Plato's Writings for spurious, because the Dialogue upon Death, for instance, is allowed to be fo? Or will you admit none of Tully's Writings to be genuine, because Sigonius imposed a Book of his own writing for Tully's Treatise de Consolatione, and the Imposture passed for some Time on the World? ALC. Suppose I admit for the Works of Tully and Plato those that commonly pass for such. What then? EUPH.

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EUPH. Why then I would fain know, DIAL. whether it be equal and impartial in a VI. Freethinker, to measure the Credibility of profane and facred Books by a different Rule. Let us know upon what Foot we Christians are to argue with Minute Philosophers: whether we may be allowed the Benefit of common Maxims in Logic and Criticism? If we may, be pleased to affign a Reason why supposititious Writings, which in the Style and Manner and Matter bear visible Marks of Imposture, and have accordingly been rejected by the Church, can be made an Argument against those which have been universally received, and handed down by an unanimous constant Tradition. There have been in all Ages and in all great Societies of Men, many capricious, vain, or wicked Impostors, who for different Ends have abused the World by spurious Writings, and created Work for Critics both in profane and facred Learning. And it would feem as filly to reject the True Writings of profane Authors for the fake of the spurious, as it would seem unreafonable to suppose, that among the Heretics and feveral Sects of Christians, there should be none capable of the like Imposture. ALC. I see no means for judging: it is all dark and doubtful, meer VOL. II. GueisVI. CRI. But if I know, that a Number of fit

Persons met together in Council, did examine and distinguish authentic Writings from spurious, relating to a Point of the highest Concern, in an Age near the Date of those Writings; though I at the Distance of many more Centuries had no other Proof; yet their Decision may be of Weight to determine my Judgment. Since it is probable they might have had several Proofs and Reasons for what they did, and not at all improbable, that those Reasons might be lost in so long a Tract of Time *.

VI. ALC. But, be the Tradition ever fo well attested, and the Books ever so genuine, yet I cannot suppose them wrote by Persons divinely inspired, so long as I see in them certain Characters inconsistent with such a Supposition. Surely the purest Language, the most persect Style, the exactest Method, and in a Word all the Excellencies of good Writing, might be expected in a Piece composed or dictated by the Spirit of God: But Books, wherein we find the reverse of all this, it were impious, not, to reject, but to attribute to the Divinity. EUPH. Say, Alcipbron,

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^{*} Vide Can. lx. Concil. Laodicen.

are the Lakes, the Rivers, or the Ocean DIAL. bounded by straight Lines? Are the Hills and Mountains exact Cones or Pyramids? Or the Stars cast into regular Figures? ALC. They are not. EUPH. But in the Works of Infects, we may observe Figures as exact as if they were drawn by the Rule and Compass. ALC. We may. EUPH. Should it not feem, therefore, that a regular Exactness, or scrupulous Attention to what Men call the Rules of Art, is not observed in the great Productions of the Author of Nature? ALC. It should. EUPH. And when a great Prince declareth his Will in Laws and Edicts to his Subjects, is he careful about a pure Style or elegant Composition? Does he not leave his Secretaries and Clerks to express his Sense in their own Words? Is not the Phrase on such Occasions thought proper if it conveys as much as was intended? And would not the divine Strain of certain modern Critics be judged affected and improper for such Uses? ALC. It must be owned, Laws and Edicts and Grants, for Solœcism and Tautology, are very offensive to the harmonious Ears of a fine Writer. EUPH. Why then should we expect in the Oracles of God an Exactness, that would be misbecoming and beneath the Dignity of an Earth-

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DIAL. Earthly Monarch, and which bears no VI. Proportion or Resemblance to the magnificent Works of the Creation? ALC. But granting that a nice Regard to Particles and critical Rules is a Thing too little and mean to be expected in Divine Revelations; and that there is more Force and Spirit, and true Greatness in a negligent unequal Style, than in the well turned Periods of a polite Writer: Yet what is all this to the bald and flat Compositions of those you call the divine Penmen? I can never be perfuaded, the fupreme Being would pick out the poorest and meanest of Scriblers for his Secretaries. EUPH. O Alciphron, if I durst follow my own Judgment, I should be apt to think there are noble Beauties in the Style of the Holy Scripture: in the narrative Parts a Strain fo fimple and unaffected: in the devotional and prophetic, fo animated and fublime: and in the doctrinal Parts such an Air of Dignity and Authority as feems to speak their Original divine. But I shall not enter into a Dispute about Taste; much less set up my Judgment on so nice a Point against that of the Wits, and Men of Genius, with which your Sect abounds. And I have no Temptation to it, inafmuch as it feems to me, the Oracles of God are not the less so for being delivered in a plain Drefs,

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Dress, rather than in the enticing Words of DIAL. Man's Wisdom. ALC. This may perhaps VI. be an Apology for some Simplicity and Negligence in writing.

VII. But what Apology can be made for Nonsense, crude Nonsense? Of which I could easily assign many Instances, having once in my Life read the Scripture thorough with that very View. Look here, said he, opening a Bible, in the forty ninth Psalm, the Author begins very magnificently, calling upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth to give ear, and assuring them his Mouth shall speak of Wisdom, and the Meditation of his Heart shall be of Understanding.

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Quid dignum tanto feret bic promissor biatu?

He hath no sooner done with his Preface, but he puts this senseles Question. Wherefore should I fear in the Days of Evil; when the Wickedness of my Heels shall compass me about? The Iniquity of my Heels! What Nonsense after such a solemn Introduction! EUPH. For my own part, I have naturally weak Eyes, and know there are many Things that I cannot see, which are nevertheless distinctly seen by others. I do not therefore

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DIAL. fore conclude a Thing to be absolutely invisible; because it is so to me. And fince it is possible it may be with my Understanding, as it is with my Eyes, I dare not pronounce a Thing to be Nonsense, because I do not understand it. Of this Passage many Interpretations are given. The Word render'd Heels may fignify Fraud or Supplantation: By fome it is translated past Wickedness, the Heel being the hinder Part of the Foot; by others Iniquity in the End of my Days, the Heel being one Extremity of the Body; by some the Iniquity of my Enemies that may supplant me; by others my own Faults or Iniquities which I have passed over as light Matters, and trampled under my Feet. Some render it the Iniquity of my Ways: others my Transgressions which are like Slips and Slidings of the Heel. And after all might not this Expression so harsh and odd to English Ears have been very natural and obvious in the Hebrew Tongue, which, as every other Language, had its Idioms? the Force and Propriety whereof may as eafily be conceived lost in a long Tract of Time, as the Signification of some Hebrew Words, which are not now intelligible, though no Body doubts but they had once a Meaning as well as the other Words of that Language. Granting, therefore, that certain

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certain Passages in the Holy Scripture may DIAL. not be understood, it will not thence follow that its Penmen wrote Nonfense: For I conceive Nonfense to be one Thing and Unintelligible another. CRI. An English Gentleman of my Acquaintance one Day entertaining some Foreigners at his House, fent a Servant to know the Occasion of a fudden Tumult in the Yard, who brought him Word, the Horses were fallen together by the Ears: His Guests inquiring what the Matter was, he translates it literally; Les Chevaux sont tombez ensemble par les oreilles. Which made them stare; what expressed a very plain Sense in the Original English, being incomprehensible when rendered Word for Word into French. And I remember to have heard a Man excuse the Bulls of his Countrymen, by suppofing them fo many literal Translations. EUPH. But not to grow tedious, I refer to the Critics and Commentators where you will find the Use of this Remark, which clearing up feveral obfcure Paffages you took for Nonsense, may possibly incline you to fuspect your own Judgment In this very Pfalm you have of the rest. pitched on, the good Sense and Moral contained in what follows, should, methinks, make a candid Reader judge favourably of the original Sense of the Author, in that

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DIAL. Part which he could not understand. Say, Alcipbron, in reading the Claffics, do you forthwith conclude every Passage to be Nonsense, that you cannot make Sense of? ALC. By no Means: Difficulties must be supposed to rise from different Idioms, old Customs, Hints, and Allusions, clear in one Time or Place, and obfcure in another. EUPH. And why will you not judge of Scripture by the same Rule. Those Sources of Obscurity you mention are all common both to facred and profane Writings: And there is no Doubt, but an exacter Knowledge in Language and Circumstances, would in both cause Difficulties to vanish like Shades before the Light of the Sun. Jeremiah, to describe a furious Invader, saith: Behold. he shall come up as a Lion from the Swelling of Jordan against the Habitation of the strong. One would be apt to think this Passage odd and improper, and that it had been more reasonable to have said, a Lion from the Mountain or the Defart. But Travellers, as an ingenious Man observes, who have feen the River Jordan bounded by low Lands with many Reeds or Thickets affording Shelter to wild Beafts, (which being fuddenly dislodged by a rapid Overflowing of the River, rush into the Upland Country) perceive the Force ou

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Force and Propriety of the Compari-DIAL. fon; and that the Difficulty proceeds, not VI. from Nonsense in the Writer, but from Ignorance in the Reader. It is needless to amass together Instances which may be found in every Commentator: I only beg leave to observe, that sometimes Men, looking deeper or higher than they need for a profound or remote Sense, overlook the natural obvious Sense, lying, if I may fo fay, at their Feet, and fo make Difficulties instead of finding them. This seems to be the Case of that celebrated Passage, which hath created fo much Work in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rife not at ' all? Why are they then baptized for the ' dead?' I remember to have heard this Text explained by Laches the Vicar of our Parish to my Neighbour Lycon, who was much perplexed about its Meaning. If it had been translated, as it might very justly, baptized for the sake of the dead, I do not see, said Laches, why People should be puzzled about the Sense of this Pasfage; for tell me, I befeech you, for whose fake do you think those Christians were baptized? For whose sake, answered Lycon, but their own? How do you mean, for their own fake in this Life, or the

DIAL. next? Doubtless in the next, for it was plain they could get nothing by it in this. They were then, replied Laches, baptized not for the fake of themselves while living, but for the fake of themselves when dead; not for the Living, but the Dead. I grant it. Baptism therefore must have been to them a fruitless thing, if the Dead rise not at all. It must. Whence Laches inferred, That St. Paul's Argument was clear and pertinent for the Resurrection: And Lycon allowed it to be argumentum ad bominem to those who had fought Baptism. There is then, concluded Laches, no Necessity for supposing, that living Men were in those Days baptized instead of those who died without Baptism, or of running into any other odd Suppositions, or strained and far-fetched Interpretations to make Sense of this Passage. ALC. Here and there a difficult Passage may be cleared: But there are many which no Art or Wit of Man can account for. What fay you to those Difcoveries, made by fome of our learned Writers, of false Citations from the Old Testament found in the Gospel? EUPH. That some few Passages are cited by the Writers of the New Testament, out of the Old, and by the Fathers out of the New, which are not in fo many Words

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Words to be found in them, is no new DIAL. Discovery of Minute Philosophers, but known and observed long before by Christian Writers; who have made no Scruple to grant, that some things might have been inserted by careless or mistaken Transcribers into the Text, from the Margin, others left out, and others altered; whence fo many various Readings. But these are things of small moment, and that all other ancient Authors have been subject to; and upon which no Point of Doctrine depends, which may not be proved without Nay further, if it be any Advantage to your Cause, it hath been observed, That the eighteenth Pfalm, as recited in the twenty fecond Chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, varies in above forty Places, if you regard every little literal Difference: And that a Critic may now and then discover small Variations, is what no body can deny. But to make the most of these Concessions, What can you infer from them, more than that the Defign of the Holy Scripture was not to make us exactly knowing in Circumstantials? And that the Spirit did not dictate every Payticle and Syllable, or preserve them from every minute Alteration by Miracle? which to believe, would look like Rabinical Superstition. ALC. But what Marks

DIAL. Marks of Divinity can possibly be in Writings which do not reach the Exactness even of Humane Art? EUPH. I never thought nor expected that the Holy Scripture should shew it self divine, by a circumstantial Accuracy of Narration, by Exactness of Method, by strictly obferving the Rules of Rhetoric, Grammar, and Criticism, in harmonious Periods, in elegant and choice Expressions, or in technical Definitions and Partitions. things would look too like a Humane Composition. Methinks there is in that fimple, unaffected, artless, unequal, bold, figurative Style of the Holy Scripture, a Character fingularly great and majestic, and that looks more like Divine Inspiration, than any other Composition that I know. But, as I said before, I shall not dispute a Point of Criticism with the Gentlemen of your Sect, who, it seems, are the modern Standard for Wit and Taste. ALC. Well, I shall not insist on fmall Slips, or the Inaccuracy of citing or transcribing: And I freely own, that Repetitions, Want of Method, or Want of Exactness in Circumstances, are not the things that chiefly flick with me; no more than the plain patriarchal Manners, or the peculiar Usages and Customs of the Jews and first Christians so different from ours;

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ours; and that to reject the Scripture on DIAL. fuch Accounts would be to act like those French Wits, who censure Homer because they do not find in him the Style, Notions, and Manners of their own Age and Country. Was there nothing else to divide us, I should make no great Difficulty of owning, That a popular uncorrect Style might answer the general Ends of Revelation, as well, perhaps, as a more critical and exact one. But the Obscurity still sticks with me. Methinks if the Supreme Being had spoke to Man, he would have spoke clearly to him, and that the Word of God should not need a Comment.

VIII. EUPH. You seem, Alciphron, to think Obscurity a Defect; but if it should prove to be no Defect, there would then be no Force in this Objection. ALC. I grant there would not. EUPH. Pray tell me, are not Speech and Style instrumental to convey Thoughts and Notions, to beget Knowledge, Opinion, and Assent? ALC. This is true. EUPH. And is not the Perfection of an Instrument to be measured by the Use to which it is subservient? ALC. It is. EUPH. What therefore is a Defect in one Instrument, may be none in another. For Instance, edged

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DIAL. edged Tools are in general designed to cut: but the Uses of an Axe and a Razor being different, it is no Defect in an Axe, that it hath not the keen Edge of a Razor: nor in the Razor, that it hath not the Weight or Strength of an Axe. ALC. I acknowledge this to be true. EUPH. And may we not fay in general, that every Instrument is perfect which answers the Purpose or Intention of him who useth it? ALC. We may. EUPH. Hence it feems to follow, that no Man's Speech is defective in point of Clearness, though it should not be intelligible to all Men, if it be fufficiently fo to those who, he intended, should understand it: or though it should not in all Parts be equally clear, or convey a perfect Knowledge, where he intended only an imperfect Hint. It feems fo. EUPH. Ought we not therefore to know the Intention of the Speaker, to be able to know whether his Style be obscure through Defect or Design? ALC. We ought. EUPH. But is it possible for Man to know all the Ends and Purpofes of God's Revelations? ALC. It is not. EUPH. How then can you tell, but the Obscurity of some Parts of Scripture may well confift with the Purpose which you know not, and consequently be no Argument against its coming from God? The Books Books of Holy Scripture were written in DIAL. ancient Languages, at distant Times, on fundry Occasions, and very different Subjects. Is it not therefore reasonable to imagine, that some Parts or Passages might have been clearly enough understood by those, for whose proper Use they were principally defigned, and yet feem obscure to us, who speak another Language, and live in other Times? Is it at all abfurd or unfuitable to the Notion we have of God or Man, to suppose that God may reveal, and yet reveal with a Referve, upon certain remote and fublime Subjects, content to give us Hints and Glimpses, rather than Views? May we not also suppose from the Reason of Things, and the Analogy of Nature, that some Points, which might otherwise have been more clearly explained, were left obscure meerly to encourage our Diligence and Modesty? Two Virtues, which, if it might not seem disrespectful to such great Men, I would recommend to the Minute Philo-Lyficles replied, This indeed is fophers. excellent: You expect that Men of Sense and Spirit should in great Humility put out their Eyes, and blindly swallow all the Abfurdities and Nonfense that shall be offered to them for Divine Revelation. EUPH. On the contrary, I would have them

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DIAL them open their Eyes, look sharply, and try the Spirit, whether it is of God: and not fupinely and ignorantly condemn in the gross, all Religions together, Piety with Superstition, Truth for the sake of Error, Matter of Fact for the fake of Fiction: a Conduct, which at first Sight would feem abfurd in History, Physic, or any other Branch of Humane Inquiry! But to compare the Christian Syftem, or Holy Scriptures, with other Pretences to Divine Revelation, to confider impartially the Doctrines, Precepts, and Events therein contained; weigh them in the balance with any other religious, natural, moral, or historical Accounts; and diligently to examine all those Proofs, internal and external, that for fo many Ages have been able to influence and perfuade fo many wife, learned, and inquifitive Men: Perhaps they might find in it certain peculiar Characters, which fufficiently distinguish it from all other Religions and pretended Revelations, whereon to ground a reasonable Faith. In which Case I leave them to consider, whether it would be right to reject with peremptory Scorn a Revelation fo distinguished and attested, upon account of Obscurity in some Parts of it? and whether it would feem beneath Men of their Sense and Spid

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rit to acknowledge, that, for ought they DIAL. know, a Light inadequate to things, may vet be adequate to the Purpose of Providence? and whether it might be unbecoming their Sagacity and critical Skill to own, that literal Translations from Books in an ancient Oriental Tongue, wherein there are fo many Peculiarities, as to the Manner of Writing, the Figures of Speech, and Structure of the Phrase, so remote from all our modern Idioms, and in which we have no other coæval Writings extant, might well be obscure in many Places, especially such as treat of Subjects sublime and difficult in their own Nature; or allude to Things, Customs, or Events, very distant from our Knowledge? And laftly, whether it might not become their Character, as impartial and unprejudiced Men, to confider the Bible in the same Light they would pro-Men are apt to make fane Authors? great Allowance for Transpositions, Omisfions, and literal Errors of Transcribers in other ancient Books, and very great for the difference of Style and Manners, especially in Eastern Writings, such as the Remains of Zoroafter and Confucius, and why not in the Prophets? In reading Horace or Perfius, to make out the Sense, they will be at the pains to discover a hidden Drama, and why not in Solomon or St. VOL. II.

DIAL. Paul? I hear there are certain ingenious Men who despise King David's Poetry, and yet profess to admire Homer and Pindar. If there be no Prejudice or Affectation in this, let them but make a literal Version from those Authors into English Prose, and they will then be better able to judge of the Pfalms. You may discourse and expatiate; but notwithstanding all you have said or shall fay, it is a clear Point that a Revelation, which doth not reveal, can be no better than a Contradiction in Terms. EUPH. Tell me, Alciphron, do you not acknowledge the Light of the Sun to be the most glorious Production of Providence in this ALC. Suppose I do. Natural World? EUPH. This Light, nevertheless, which you cannot deny to be of God's making, shines only on the Surface of Things, shines not at all in the Night, shines imperfectly in the Twilight, is often interrupted, refracted, and obscured, represents distant things, and small things dubiously, imperfectly, or not at all. Is this true or ALC. It is. EUPH. Should it not follow therefore, that to expect in this World a constant uniform Light from God, without any Mixture of Shade or Mystery, would be departing from the Rule and Analogy of the Creation? and that

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that consequently it is no Argument the DIAL. Light of Revelation is not Divine, be-VI. cause it may not be so clear and full as you expect; or because it may not equally shine at all Times, or in all Places. ALC. As I profess my self candid and indifferent throughout this Debate, I must needs own you say some plausible things, as a Man of Argument will never fail to do in vindication of his Prejudices.

IX. But, to deal plainly, I must tell you once for all, that you may question and answer, illustrate, and enlarge for ever, without being able to convince me that the Christian Religion is of Divine Reve-I have faid feveral things, and have many more to fay, which, believe me, have Weight not only with my felf, but with many great Men my very good Friends, and will have Weight whatever Euphranor can fay to the contrary. EUPH. O Alcipbron! I envy you the Happiness of fuch Acquaintance. But, as my Lot fallen in this remote Corner deprives me of that Advantage, I am obliged to make the most of this Opportunity, which you and Lysicles have put into my Hands. I consider you as two able Chirurgeons, and you were pleased to consider me as a Patient, whose Cure you have generously undertaken.

Now a Patient must have full DIAL. taken. Liberty to explain his Case, and tell all his Symptoms, the concealing of which might prevent a perfect Cure. You will be pleased therefore to understand me, not as objecting to, or arguing against, either your Skill or Medicines, but only as fetting forth my own Case, and the Effects they have upon me. Say, Alciphron, did you not give me to understand that you would extirpate my Prejudices? ALC. It is true: a good Physician eradicates every Fibre of the Disease. Come, you shall have a patient Hearing. EUPH. Pray, was it not the Opinion of Plato, that God inspired particular Men, as Organs or Trumpets, to proclaim and found forth his Oracles to the World*? And was not the fame Opinion also embraced by others the greatest Writers of Antiquity? CRI. Socrates feems to have thought that all true Poets spoke by Inspiration; and Tully, that there was no extraordinary Genius without it. This hath made some of our affected Free-thinkers attempt to pass themselves upon the World for Enthusiasts. ALC. What would you infer from all this? EUPH. I would infer, that Infpiration should seem nothing impossible or absurd, but rather agreeable to the Light

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^{*} Plato in Ione.

of Reason, and the Notions of Mankind. DIAL. And this, I suppose, you will acknowledge, having made it an Objection against a particular Revelation, that there are fo many Pretences to it throughout the World. ALC. O Euphranor, he who looks into the bottom of things, and resolves them into their first Principles, is not eafily amused with Words. The Word Inspiration sounds indeed big, but let us, if you please, take an original View of the Thing fignified by it. To inspire, is a Word borrowed from the Latin, and strictly taken means no more than to breathe or blow in: nothing therefore can be inspired but what can be blown or breathed, and nothing can be fo but Wind or Vapour, which indeed may fill or puff up Men with fanatical and hypocondriacal Ravings. This fort of Inspiration I readily admit. EUPH. What you fay is fubtle, and I know not what Effect it might have upon me, if your profound Discourse did not hinder its own Operation. ALC. How fo? EUPH. Tell me, Alciphron, do you discourse, or do you not? To me it feems that you difcourse admirably. ALC. Be that as it will, it is certain I discourse. EUPH. But when I endeavour to look into the bottom of things, behold! a Scruple rifeth

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DIAL.in my Mind how this can be; for to difcourse is a Word of Latin Derivation, which originally fignifies to run about; and a Man cannot run about but he must change Place, and move his Legs; fo long therefore as you fit on this Bench, you cannot be faid to discourse. Solve me this Difficulty, and then perhaps I may be able to folve yours. ALC. You are to know, that Discourse is a Word borrowed from fenfible Things, to express an invisible Action of the Mind, reasoning or inferring one Thing from another: and, in this translated Sense, we may be said to discourse, though we fit still. EUPH. And may we not as well conceive, that the Term Inspiration might be borrowed from fenfible things to denote an Action of God, in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the Mind of a Prophet or an Apostle? who, in this secondary, figurative, and translated Sense, may truly be faid to be inspired, though there should be nothing in the Case of that Wind or Vapour implied in the original Sense of the Word? It seems to me, that we may by looking into our own Minds plainly perceive certain Instincts, Impulfes, and Tendencies, which at proper Periods and Occasions spring up unaccountably in the Soul of Man. We observe

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very visible Signs of the same in all other DIAL. Animals. And these things being ordinary and natural, what hinders but we may conceive it possible for the Humane Mind, upon an extraordinary Account, to be moved in an extraordinary manner, and its Faculties stirred up and actuated by a fupernatural Power? That there are, and have been, and are likely to be wild Vifions, and hypochondriacal Ravings, no body can deny: but to infer from thence, that there are no true Inspirations would be too like concluding, that some Men are not in their Senses, because other Men are Fools. And though I am no Prophet, and confequently cannot pretend to a clear Notion of this Matter; yet I shall not therefore take upon me to deny, but a true Prophet or inspired Person might have had as certain Means of discerning between divine Inspiration and hypochondriacal Fancy, as you can between Sleeping and Waking, till you have proved the contrary. You may meet in the Book of Jeremiah with this Passage: 'The ' Prophet that hath a dream let him tell ' a dream: and he that hath my word, ' let him fpeak my word faithfully: what ' is the chaff to the wheat, faith the 'Lord? Is not my word like as a Fire, ' faith the Lord, and like a hammer that 'breaketh D 4

VI. here a Distinction made between Wheat and Chass, true and spurious, with the mighty Force and Power of the former. But I beg Pardon for quoting Scripture to you. I make my Appeal to the general Sense of Mankind, and the Opinion of the wisest Heathens, which seems sufficient to conclude Divine Inspiration possible, if not probable, at least till you prove the contrary.

X. ALC. The Possibility of Inspirations and Revelations I do not think it necessary to deny. Make the best you can EUPH. Now what of this Concession. is allowed possible we may suppose in ALC. We may. EUPH. Let us then suppose, that God had been pleased to make a Revelation to Men; and that he inspired some as a means to instruct others. Having supposed this, can you deny, that their inspired Discourses and Revelations might have been committed to Writing, or that being written, after a long Tract of Time they might become in several Places obscure; that some of them might even originally have been less clear than others, or that they might fuffer some Alteration by frequent Transcribing,

* Jerem xxiii. 28, 29.

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as other Writings are known to have DIAL, done? Is it not even very probable that all these things would happen? ALC. I grant it. EUPH. And granting this, with what Pretence can you reject the Holy Scriptures as not being divine, upon the account of fuch Signs or Marks, as you acknowledge would probably attend a Divine Revelation transmitted down to us through so many Ages? ALC. But allowing all that in reason you can defire, and granting that this may account for fome Obscurity, may reconcile some small Differences, or satisfy us how some Difficulties might arise by inserting, omitting, or changing here and there a Letter, a Word, or perhaps a Sentence: Yet these are but small Matters, in respect of the much more confiderable and weighty Objections I could produce, against the confessed Doctrines, or subject Matter of those Writings. Let us fee what is contained in these sacred Books, and then judge whether it is probable or possible, such Revelations should ever have been made by God? Now I defy the Wit of Man to contrive any thing more extravagant, than the Accounts we there find of Apparitions, Devils, Miracles, God manifest in the Flesh, Regeneration, Grace, Self-denial, Resurrection of the Dead, and such

DIAL. like agri somnia: things so odd, unac-

countable, and remote from the Apprehenfion of Mankind, you may as foon wash a Blackamore white, as clear them of Absurdity. No critical Skill can justify them, no Tradition recommend them, I will not fay for Divine Revelations, but even for the Inventions of Men of Sense. EUPH. I had always a great Opinion of your Sagacity, but now, Alciphron, I confider you as fomething more than Man: else how should it be possible for you to know, what or how far it may be proper for God to reveal? Methinks it may confift with all due Deference to the greatest of Humane Understandings, to suppose them ignorant of many things, which are not fuited to their Faculties, or lie out of their Reach. Even the Counfels of Princes lie often beyond the Ken of their Subjects, who can only know fo much as is revealed by those at the Helm; and are often unqualified to judge of the Usefulness and Tendency even of that, till in due Time the Scheme unfolds, and is accounted for by fucceeding Events. That many Points contained in Holy Scripture are remote from the common Apprehenfions of Mankind, cannot be denied. But I do not see, that it follows from thence, they are not of Divine Revela-

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tion. On the contrary, should it not feem DIAL. reasonable to suppose, that a Revelation from God should contain something different in Kind, or more excellent in Degree. than what lay open to the common Sense of Men, or could even be discovered by the most fagacious Philosopher? Accounts of separate Spirits, good or bad, Prophecies, Miracles, and fuch things, are undoubtedly strange: but I would fain see how you can prove them impossible or ALC. Some things there are so evidently absurd, that it would be almost as filly to disprove them as to believe them: and I take these to be of that Class.

XI. EUPH. But is it not possible, some Men may shew as much Prejudice and Narrowness in rejecting all such Accounts, as others might Easiness and Credulity in admitting them? I never durst make my own Observation or Experience the Rule and Measure of things Spiritual, Supernatural, or relating to another World, because I should think it a very bad one, even for the visible and natural things of this: It would be judging like the Siamese, who was positive it did not freeze in Holland, because he had never known such a thing as hard Water or

Ice

VI. prehend why any one, who admits the Union of the Soul and Body, should pro-

nounce it impossible for the Humane Nature to be united to the Divine, in a manner ineffable and incomprehensible by Neither can I fee any Abfurdity in admitting, that finful Man may become Regenerate, or a New Creature, by the Grace of God reclaiming him from a carnal Life, to a spiritual Life of Virtue and Holiness. And fince the being governed by Sense and Appetite is contrary to the Happiness and Perfection of a rational Creature, I do not at all wonder that we are prescribed Self-denial. As for the Resurrection of the Dead, I do not conceive it fo very contrary to the Analogy of Nature, when I behold Vegetables left to rot in the Earth, rife up again with new Life and Vigour, or a Worm to all appearance dead, change its Nature, and that, which in its first Being crawled on the Earth, become a new Species, and fly abroad with Wings. And indeed when I consider, that the Soul and Body are things fo very different and heterogeneous, I can fee no reason to be positive, that the one must necessarily be extinguished upon the Dissolution of the other; especially since I find in my self a strong

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natural Desire of Immortality, and I have DIAL. not observed that natural Appetites are VI. wont to be given in vain, or meerly to be frustrated. Upon the whole, those Points which you account extravagant and abfurd, I dare not pronounce to be so till I see good Reason for it.

XII. CRI. No, Alciphron, your positive Airs must not pass for Proofs; nor will it fuffice to fay, things are contrary to common Sense, to make us think they are so: By common Sense, I suppose, should be meant either the general Sense of Mankind, or the improved Reason of thinking Men. Now I believe that all those Articles, you have with fo much Capacity and Fire at once fummed up and exploded, may be shewn to be not disagreeable, much less contrary to common Sense in one or other of these Acceptations. That the Gods might appear and converse among Men, and that the Divinity might inhabit Humane Nature, were Points allowed by the Heathens; and for this I appeal to their Poets and Philosophers, whose Testimonies are fo numerous and clear, that it would be an Affront to repeat them to a Man of any Education. And though the Notion of a Devil may not be so obvious, or so fully described, yet there appear plain Traces DIAL. Traces of it, either from Reason or Tradition. The latter Platonists, as Porphyry and Iamblichus, are very clear in the Point, allowing that evil Dæmons delude and tempt, hurt and possess Mankind. That the ancient Greeks, Chaldwans, and Ægyptians, believed both good and bad Angels, may be plainly collected from Plato, Plutarch, and the Chaldaan Oracles. Origen observes, That almost all the Gentiles, who held the Being of Dæmons, allowed there were bad ones*. There is even fomething as early as Homer, that is thought by the learned Cardinal Bessarion † to allude to the Fall of Satan, in the Account of Ate, whom the Poet reprefents as cast down from Heaven by Jove, and then wandring about the Earth, doing Mischief to Mankind. This same Ate is faid by Hefiod, to be the Daughter of Difcord; and by Euripides, in his Hippolytus, is mentioned as a Tempter to Evil. And it is very remarkable, that Plutarch, in his Book, De vitando ære alieno, speaks after Empedocles, of certain Dæmons that fell from Heaven, and were banished by God, Δαίμονες θεήλατοι και θεανοπετείς is that less remarkable which is observed

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^{*} Origen. 1. 7. contra Celsum.

[†] In calumniat. Platonis, 1. 3. c. 7.

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by Ficinus from Pherecydes Syrus, That DIAL. there had been a Downfal of Dæmons who revolted from God: and that Ophioneus (the old Serpent) was Head of that rebellious Crew *. Then as to other Articles, let any one confider what the Pythagoreans taught, of the Purgation and λύσις, or Deliverance of the Soul: What most Philosophers, but especially the Stoics, of fubduing our Passions: What Plato and Hierocles have faid of forgiving Injuries: What the acute and sagacious Aristotle writes, in his Ethics to Nicomachus, of the Spiritual and Divine Life, that Life, which, according to him, is too excellent to be thought Humane; infomuch as Man. fo far forth as Man, cannot attain to it: but only fo far forth as he hath fomething Divine in him: And particularly, let him reflect on what Socrates taught, to wit, That Virtue is not to be learned from Men, that it is the Gift of God, and that good Men are not good by virtue of Humane Care or Diligence, εκ είναι ανθρωπίνω επιμέλειαν ή αγαθοί αγαboi vizvovia +. Let any Man, who really thinks, but confider what other thinking Men have thought, who cannot

^{*} Vid. Argum. in Phædrum Platonis.
† Vid. Plat. in Protag. & alibi passim.

DIAL. be supposed prejudiced in favour of Revealed Religion; and he will fee cause, if not to think with Reverence of the Christian Doctrines of Grace, Self-denial, Regeneration, Sanctification, and the rest, even the most mysterious, at least to judge more modeftly and warily, than he who shall, with a confident Air, pronounce them abfurd, and repugnant to the Reafon of Mankind. And in regard to a future State, the common Sense of the Gentile World, modern or ancient, and the Opinions of the wifest Men of Antiquity, are things fo well known, that I need fay nothing about them. To me it feems, the Minute Philosophers, when they appeal to Reason and common Sense, mean only the Sense of their own Party: Coin, how current foever among themfelves, that other Men will bring to the Touchstone, and pass for no more than LYS. Be those Notions ait is worth. greeable to what or whose Sense they may, they are not agreeable to mine. And if I am thought ignorant for this, I pity those who think me fo.

> XIII. I enjoy my self, and sollow my own Courses, without Remorse or Fear; which I should not do, if my Head were filled with Enthusiasm; whether Gen-

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tile or Christian, Philosophical or Reveal-DIAL ed, it is all one to me. Let others know or believe what they can, and make the best on't, I, for my part, am happy and fafe in my Ignorance, CRI. Perhaps not fo fafe neither. LYS. Why, furely you won't pretend that Ignorance is criminal? CRI. Ignorance alone is not a Crime. But that wilful Ignorance, affected Ignorance, Ignorance from Sloth, or conceited Ignorance, is a Fault, might eafily be proved by the Testimony of Heathen Writers: and it needs no Proof to shew that if Ignorance be our Fault, we cannot be secure in it as an Excuse, LYS. Honest Crito seems to hint, that a Man should take care to inform himself. while alive, left his Neglect be punished when he is dead. Nothing is fo pufillanimous and unbecoming a Gentleman, as Fear: Nor could you take a likelier Course to fix and rivet a Man of Honour in Guilt, than by attempting to frighten him out of it. This is the stale, absurd Stratagem of Priests, and that which makes them, and their Religion, more odious and contemptible to me than all the other Articles put together. CRI. I would fain know why it may not be reafonable for a Man of Honour, or any Man who has done amiss to fear? Guilt Vor. H. / E 18

DIAL. is the natural Parent of Fear; and Nature is not used to make Men fear where there is no Occasion. That impious and profane Men should expect divine Punishment, doth not feem so absurd to conceive: and that under this Expectation they should be uneasy and even afraid, how confistent soever it may or may not be with Honour, I am fure confifts with Reason. LYS. That Thing of Hell and Eternal Punishment is the most absurd, as well as the most disagreeable Thought that ever entered into the Head of Mortal Man. CRI. But you must own that it is not an Absurdity peculiar to Christians, fince Socrates, that great Free-thinker of Athens, thought it probable there may be fuch a Thing as impious Men for ever punished in Hell*. It is recorded of this same Socrates, that he has been often known to think for Four and Twenty Hours together, fixed in the fame Posture, and wrap'd up in Meditation. LYS. Our modern Free-thinkers are a more lively Sort of Men. Those old Philosophers were most of them whimsi-They had in my Judgment a narrow, timorous way of thinking, which by no means came up to the frank Humour of our Times. CRI. But I appeal

* Vid. Platon. in Georgia.

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knows not the Nature of the Soul, can be VI. affured by the Light of Reason, whether it is mortal or immortal?

An simul intereat nobiscum morte perempta, An tenebras orci visat vastasque lacunas?

LYS. But what if I know the Nature of the Soul? What if I have been taught that whole Secret by a modern Free-thinker? a Man of Science who discovered it not by a tiresome Introversion of his Faculties, not by amusing himself in a Labyrinth of Notions, or stupidly thinking for whole Days and Nights together, but by looking into Things, and observing the Analogy of Nature.

XIV. This great Man is a Philosopher by Fire, who has made many Processes upon Vegetables. It is his Opinion that Men and Vegetables are really of the same Species; that Animals are moving Vegetables, and Vegetables fixed Animals; that the Mouths of the one and the Roots of the other serve to the same Use, differing only in Position; that Blossoms and Flowers answer to the most indecent and concealed Parts in the humane Body; that Vegetable and Animal Bodies are both E 2

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DIAL. alike organized, and that in both there is Life or a certain Motion and Circulation of Juices through proper Tubes or Vessels. I shall never forget this able Man's unfolding the Nature of the Soul in the following manner. The Soul, faid he, is that specific Form or Principle from whence proceed the distinct Qualities or Properties of Things. Now, as Vegetables are a more simple and less perfect Compound, and confequently more eafily analysed than Animals, we will begin with the Contemplation of the Souls of Vegetables. Know then, that the Soul of any Plant, Rosemary for instance, is neither more nor less than its effential Oil. Upon this depends its peculiar Fragrance, Taste, and Medicinal Virtues, or in other Words its Life and Operati-Separate or extract this effential Oil by Chymic Art, and you get the Soul what remains being a of the Plant: dead Carcase, without any one Property or Virtue of the Plant, which is preserved entire in the Oil, a Drachm whereof goes further than feveral Pounds of the Plant. Now this same effential Oil is it self a Composition of Sulphur and Salt, or of a gross unctuous Substance, and a fine subtile Principle or volatile Salt imprisoned therein. This volatile Salt is properly the

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the Essence of the Soul of the Plant, con-DIAL. taining all its Virtue, and the Oil is the VI. Vehicle of this most subtile Part of the Soul, or that which fixes and individuates it. And as, upon Separation of this Oil from the Plant, the Plant died, fo a fecond Death or Death of the Soul enfues upon the Resolution of this essential Oil into its Principles; as appears by leaving it exposed for some Time to the open Air, fo that the volatile Salt or Spirit may fly off; after which the Oil remains dead and infipid, but without any fenfible Diminution of its Weight, by the Loss of that volatile Effence of the Soul, that Æthereal Aura, that Spark of Entity; which returns and mixes with the Solar Light, the univerfal Soul of the World, and only Source of Life, whether Vegetable, Animal, or Intellectual; which differ only according to the Grossness or Fineness of the Vehicles, and the different Textures of the natural Alembics, or in other Words, the organized Bodies, where the abovementioned volatile Effence inhabits and is elaborated, where it acts and is acted upon. This Chymical Syftem lets you at once into the Nature of the Soul, and accounts for all its Phæno-In that Compound which is called Man, the Soul or effential Oil is what E 3 com-

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DIAL. commonly goes by the Name of Animal Spirit: For you must know, it is a Point agreed by Chymists, that Spirits are nothing but the more subtile Oils. Now in proportion, as the effential Oil of the vegetable Man is more fubtile than that of other Vegetables, the volatile Salt that impregnates it is more at Liberty to act: which accounts for those specific Properties and Actions of Humane Kind, which distinguish them above other Creatures. Hence you may learn why among the wife Ancients, Salt was another Name for Wit, and in our Times a dull Man is faid to be infipid or infulse. Aromatic Oils maturated by great Length of Time turn to Salts: this shews why Humane Kind grow wifer by Age. And what I have faid of the twofold Death or Diffolution, first of the Compound, by separating the Soul from the organical Body, and fecondly of the Soul it felf, by dividing the volatile Salt from the Oil, illustrates and explains that Notion of certain ancient Philosophers: that as the Man was a Compound of Soul and Body, fo the Soul was compounded of the Mind or Intellect, and its Æthereal Vehicle: and that the Separation of Soul and Body or Death of the Man is, after a long Tract of Time, succeeded by a second

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cond Death of the Soul it felf; to wit, DIAL. the Separation or Deliverance of the In- VI. tellect from its Vehicle, and Reunion with the Sun. EUPH. O Lysicles, your ingenious Friend has opened a new Scene, and explained the most obscure and difficult Points in the clearest and easiest Man-LYS. I must own this Account of Things struck my Fancy. I am no great Lover of Creeds or Systems: but when a Notion is reasonable and grounded on Experience I know how to value it. CRI. In good earnest, Lysicles, do you believe this Account to be true? LYS. Why then in good earnest I do not know whether I do or no. But I can affure you the ingenious Artist himself has not the least Doubt about it. And to believe an Artist in his Art is a just Maxim and short Way to Science. CRI. But what relation hath the Soul of Man to Chymic Art? The fame Reason, that bids me trust a skilful Artist in his Art, inclines me to suspect him out of his Art. Men are too apt to reduce unknown Things to the Standard of what they know, and bring a Prejudice or Tincture from Things they have been conversant in, to judge thereby of Things in which they have not been conversant. I have known a Fidler gravely teach that the Soul was Harmony; a Geo-E 4 metrician

VI. be extended; and a Physician, who having pickled half a Dozen Embryos and dissected as many Rats and Frogs, grew conceited and affirmed there was no Soul at all, and that it was a vulgar Error.

LYS. My Notions sit easy. I shall not engage in pedantic Disputes about them. They who don't like them may leave them. EUPH. This, I suppose, is said much like a Gentleman.

XV. But pray, Lyficles, tell me whether the Clergy come within that general Rule of yours: that an Artist may be trusted in his Art? LYS. By no Means. EUPH. Why fo? LYS. Because I take my felf to know as much of those Matters as they do. EUPH. But you allow, that in any other Profession; one who hath spent much Time and Pains may attain more Knowledge, than a Man of equal or better Parts, who never made it his particular Bufiness. LYS. I do. EUPH. And nevertheless in Things religious and divine you think all Men equally knowing. LYS. I do not fay all Men. But I think all Men of Sense competent Judges. EUPH. What! are the Divine Attributes and Dispensations to Mankind, the true End and Happiness

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ness of of rational Creatures, with the Means of DIAL. improving and perfecting their Beings, VI. more easy and obvious Points than those which make the Subject of every common Profession? LYS. Perhaps not: but one Thing I know, some Things are so manifeftly abfurd, that no Authority shall make me give into them. For instance, if all Mankind should pretend to persuade me that the Son of God was born upon Earth in a poor Family, was spit upon, buffeted, and crucified, lived like a Beggar, and died like a Thief, I should never believe one Syllable of it. Common Sense shews every one, what Figure it would be decent for an Earthly Prince or Ambaffador to make; and the Son of God, upon an Ambassy from Heaven, must needs have made an Appearance beyond all others of great eclat, and in all respects the very reverse of that which Jesus Christ is reported to have made, even by his own Historians. EUPH. O Lysicles, though I had ever fo much Mind to approve and applaud your ingenious Reasoning, yet I dare not affent to this for fear of Crito. LYS. Why fo? EUPH. Because he obferved just now, that Men judge of things they do not know, by Prejudices from things they do know. And I fear he would object that you, who have been con-

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DIAL. conversant in the grand Monde, having your Head filled with a Notion of Attendants and Equipage and Liveries, the familiar Badges of Humane Grandeur, are less able to judge of that which is truly Divine: and that one who had feen less, and thought more, would be apt to imagine a pompous Parade of worldly Greatness, not the most becoming the Author of a spiritual Religion, that was defigned to wean Men from the World, and raise them above it. CRI. Do you think, Lyficles, if a Man should make his Entrance into London in a rich Suit of Clothes, with a hundred gilt Coaches, and a thousand laced Footmen; that this would be a more divine Appearance, and have more of true Grandeur in it, than if he had Power with a Word to heal all manner of Diseases, to raise the dead to Life, and still the raging of the Winds and Sea? LYS. Without all doubt it must be very agreeable to common Sense to suppose, that he could restore others to Life who could not fave his own. You tell us, indeed, that he rose again from the dead: but what Occasion was there for him to die, the just for the unjust, the Son of God for wicked Men? And why in that individual Place? Why at that very Time above all others? Why did he not

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not make his Appearance earlier, and DIAL. preach in all Parts of the World, that the Benefit might have been more extensive and equal? Account for all these Points and reconcile them, if you can, to the common Notions and plain Sense of Man-CRI. And what if those, as well as many other Points, should lie out of the Road that we are acquainted with: must we therefore explode them, and make it a Rule to condemn every Proceeding as fenfeless, that doth not square with the vulgar Sense of Man? That, indeed, which evidently contradicts Sense and Reason you have a Right to disbelieve. And when you are unjustly treated you have the fame Right to complain. think you should distinguish between Matter of Debt and Matter of Favour. Thus much is observed in all Intercourse between Man and Man: wherein Acts of meer Benevolence are never infifted on, or examined and measured with the same accurate Line as Matters of Justice. Who but a Minute Philosopher would, upon a gratuitous Distribution of Favours, inquire, why at this Time, and not before? why to these Persons, and not to others? Various are the natural Abilities and Opportunities of Humane Kind. How wide a Difference is there in respect of the Law of

DIAL of Nature, between one of our stupid Plowmen and a Minute Philosopher! Between a Laplander and an Athenian! That Conduct, therefore, which feems to you partial or unequal, may be found as well in the Dispensation of Natural Religion as of Revealed, And if so, why it should be made an Objection against the one more than the other, I leave you to account for the rest. If the Precepts and certain primary Tenets of Religion appear in the Eye of Reason good and useful; and if they are also found to be so by their Effects; we may, for the fake of them, admit certain other Points or Doctrines recommended with them, to have a good Tendency, to be right and true; although we cannot discern their Goodness or Truth by the meer Light of Humane Reason, which may well be supposed an insufficient Judge of the Proceedings, Counfels, and Defigns of Providence, and this fufficeth to make our Conviction reasonable.

> XVI. It is an allowed Point that no Man can judge of this or that Part of a Machine taken by it felf, without knowing the whole, the mutual Relation or Dependence of its Parts, and the End for which it was made. And, as this is a Point acknowledged in corporeal and na-

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rural Things, ought we not by a Parity of DIAL. Reason to suspend our Judgment concerning the moral Fitness of a single unaccountable Part of the Divine Oeconomy, till we are more fully acquainted with the moral System, or World of Spirits, and are let into the Defigns of God's Providence, and have an extensive View of his Dispensations past, present, and future? Alas! Lyficles, what do you know even of your felf, whence you come, what you are, or whither you are going? To me it feems, that a Minute Philosopher is like a conceited Spectator, who never looked behind the Scenes, and yet would judge of the Machinery; who from a transient Glimpse of a Part only of some one Scene, would take upon him to cenfure the Plot of a Play. LYS. As to the Plot I won't fay; but in half a Scene a Man may judge of an abfurd Actor. With what Colour or Pretext can you justify the vindictive, froward, whimfical Behaviour of fome inspired Teachers or Prophets? Particulars that ferve neither for Profit nor Pleafure I make a shift to forget: but in general the Truth of this Charge I do very well remember. CRI. You need be at no Pains to prove a Point I shall neither justify nor deny. That there have been Humane Passions, Infirmities, and Defects in Persons

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DIAL. Persons inspired by God, I freely own; nay, that very wicked Men have been infpired, as Balaam, for instance, and Caiaphas, cannot be denied. But what will you infer from thence? Can you prove it impossible, that a weak or finful Man should become an Instrument to the Spirit of God, for conveying his Purpose to other Sinners, or that Divine Light may not, as well as the Light of the Sun, shine on a foul Vessel without polluting its Rays? LYS. To make short Work, the right Way would be to put out our Eyes, and not judge at all. CRI. I do not fay for but I think it would be right, if some sanguine Persons upon certain Points suspected their own Judgment. ALC. But the very Things faid to be inspired, taken by themselves and in their own Nature, are fometimes fo wrong, to fay no worse, that a Man may pronounce them not to be divine at first Sight; without troubling his Head about the System of Providence or Connexion of Events: As one may fay that Grass is green, without knowing or confidering how it grows, what Uses it is fubservient to, or how it is connected with

the mundane System. Thus for instance, the spoiling of the Ægyptians, and the Extirpation of the Canaanites, every one

at first Glance sees to be cruel and unjust,

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and may therefore without deliberating DIAL. pronounce them unworthy of God. CRI. But, Alcipbron, to judge rightly of these Things, may it not be proper to confider, how long the Ifraelites had wrought under those severe Task-masters of Egypt, what Injuries and Hardships they had suftained from them, what Crimes and Abominations the Canaanites had been guilty of, what Right God hath to dispose of the Things of this World, to punish Delinquents, and to appoint both the Manner and the Instruments of his Justice? Man, who has not fuch Right over his Fellow-Creatures, who is himself a Fellow-sinner with them, who is liable to Error as well as Passion, whose Views are imperfect, who is governed more by Prejudice than the Truth of Things, may not improbably deceive himself, when he sets up for a Judge of the Proceedings of the holy, omniscient, impassive Creator and Governor of all Things.

XVII. ALC. Believe me, Crito, Men are never so industrious to deceive themselves, as when they engage to defend their Prejudices. You would fain reason us out of all Use of our Reason: Can any Thing be more irrational? To forbid us to reason on the Divine Dispensations, is to suppose,

DIAL. pose, they will not bear the Test of Reafon; or, in other Words, that God acts without Reason, which ought not to be admitted, no, not in any fingle instance: For if in one, why not in another? Whoever, therefore, allows a God, must allow that he always acts reasonably. I will not therefore attribute to him Actions and Proceedings that are unreasonable. hath given me Reason to judge withal: and I will judge by that unerring Light, lighted from the universal Lamp of Nature. CRI. O Alcipbron! as I frankly own the common Remark to be true, That when a Man is against Reason, it is a shrewd Sign Reason is against him; fo I should never go about to diffuade any one, much less one who so well knew the Value of it, from using that noble Talent. On the contrary, upon all Subjects of Moment, in my Opinion, a Man ought to use his Reason; but then, whether it may not be reafonable to use it with some Deference to fuperior Reason, it will not, perhaps, be amiss to consider. He who hath an exact View of the Measure, and of the Thing to be measured, if he applies the one to the other, may, I grant, measure exactly. But he, who undertakes

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takes to measure without knowing ei-DIAL ther, can be no more exact than he is modest. It may not, nevertheless, be impossible to find a Man, who, having neither an abstract Idea of moral Fitness. nor an adequate Idea of the Divine Oeconomy, shall yet pretend to measure the one by the other. ALC. It must furely derogate from the Wisdom of God, to suppose his Conduct cannot bear being inspected, not even by the Twilight of Humane Reason. EUPH. You allow, then, God to be wife? ALC. I do. EUPH. What! infinitely wise? ALC. Even infinitely. EUPH. His Wisdom. then, far exceeds that of Man. EUPH. Probably more than the Wisdom of Man, that of a Child. ALC. Without all question. EUPH. What think you, Alciphron, must not the Conduct of a Parent feem very unaccountable to a Child, when its Inclinations are thwarted, when it is put to learn the Letters, when it is obliged to fwallow bitter Physic, to part with what it likes, and to fuffer, and do, and fee many things done contrary to its own Judgment, however reasonable or agreeable to ALC. This I grant. that of others? EUPH. Will it not therefore follow from hence by a parity of Reason, that VOL. II.

DIAL. the little Child, Man, when it takes upon it to judge of the Schemes of Parental Providence; and a Thing of Yesterday, to criticise the Oeconomy of the Ancient of Days; will it not follow, I fay, that fuch a Judge, of fuch Matters, must be apt to make very erroneous Judgments? esteeming those things in themfelves unaccountable, which he cannot account for, and concluding of some certain Points, from an appearance of arbitrary Carriage towards him, which is fuited to his Infancy and Ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or abfurd, and cannot proceed from a wife, just, and benevolent God. This fingle Confideration, if duly attended to and applied, would, I verily think, put an end to many conceited Reasonings against Revealed Religion. ALC. You would have us then conclude, that things, to our Wisdom unaccountable, may nevertheless proceed from an Abyss of Wisdom which our Line cannot fathom: and that Prospects viewed but in part, and by the broken tinged Light of our Intellects, though to us they may feem disproportionate and monstrous, may nevertheless appear quite otherwise to another Eye, and in a different Situation: In a word, that as Humane Wisdom is but childish Folly, in respect

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respect of the Divine, so the Wisdom of DIAL. God may sometimes seem Foolishness to VI.

XVIII. EUPH. I would not have you make these Conclusions, unless in reason you ought to make them: But if they are reasonable, why should you not make them? ALC. Some things may feem reafonable at one Time, and not at another: And I take this very Apology you make, for Credulity and Superstition, to be one of those Things. When I view it in its Principles, it feems naturally to follow from just Concessions: but when I consider its Consequences, I cannot agree to it. A Man had as good abdicate his Nature, as disclaim the Use of Reason. A Doctrine is unaccountable, therefore it must EUPH. Credulity and Sube Divine! perstition are Qualities so disagreeable and degrading to Humane Nature, fo furely an Effect of Weakness, and so frequently a Cause of Wickedness, that I should be very much furprised to find a just Course of Reasoning lead to them. I can never think that Reason is a blind Guide to Folly, or that there is any Connexion between Truth and Falshood, no more than I can think a Thing's being unaccountable a Proof that it is Divine: Though at the F 2 fame DIAL. same time I cannot help acknowledging, it follows from your own avow'd Principles, that a Thing's being unaccountable or incomprehensible to our Reason, is no fure Argument to conclude it is not Divine; especially when there are collateral A Child is influ-Proofs of its being fo. enced by the many sensible Effects it hath felt, of Paternal Love and Care and fuperior Wisdom, to believe and do several things with an implicite Faith and Obedience: And if we in the same manner, from the Truth and Reasonableness which we plainly fee in fo many Points within our Cognisance, and the Advantages which we experience from the Seed of the Gofpel fown in good Ground, were disposed to an implicit Belief of certain other Points, relating to Schemes we do not know, or Subjects to which our Talents are perhaps disproportionate, I am tempted to think it might become our Duty without dishonouring our Reason; which is never fo much dishonoured as when it is foiled, and never in more danger of being foiled, than by judging where it hath neither Means nor Right to judge. LYS. I would give a good deal to fee that ingenious Gamester Glaucus have the handling of Euphranor one Night at our Club. I own he is a Peg too high for me in some

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of his Notions: But then he is admi-DIAL. rable at vindicating Humane Reason a- VI. gainst the Impositions of Priestcraft.

XIX. ALC. He would undertake to make it as clear as Day Light, that there was nothing worth a Straw in Christianity, but what every one knew, or might know, as well without as with it, before as fince Jesus Christ. CRI. That great Man, it feems, teacheth, that common Sense alone is the Pole-Star, by which Mankind ought to fteer: and that what is called Revelation must be ridiculous, because it is unnecessary and useless, the natural Talents of every Man being fufficient, to make him happy, good, and wife, without any further Correspondence with Heaven either for Light or Aid. EUPH. I have already acknowledged how fenfible I am, that my Situation in this obscure Corner of the Country deprives me of many Advantages, to be had from the Conversation of ingenious Men in Town. To make my felf fome Amends, I am obliged to converse with the Dead and my own Thoughts, which last I know are of little Weight against the Authority of Glaucus, or fuch like great Men in the Minute Philosophy. But what shall we lay to Socrates, for he too was of an Opi-F 3 nion

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DIAL. nion very different from that ascribed to Glaucus? ALC. For the present we need not infift on Authorities, ancient or modern, or inquire which was the greater Man Socrates or Glaucus. Though, methinks, for fo much as Authority can fignify, the present Times, gray and hoary with Age and Experience, have a manifest Advantage over those that are falsly called ancient. But not to dwell on Authorities, I tell you in plain English, Euphranor, we do not want your Revelations: and that for this plain Reason, those that are clear every Body knew before, and those that are obscure no Body is the better for. EUPH. As it is impossible, that a Man should believe the practic Principles of the Christian Religion, and not be the better for them: So it is evident, that those Principles may be much more eafily taught as Points of Faith, than demonstrated or discovered as Points of Science. call evident, because it is plain Fact. Since we daily fee that many are instructed in Matters of Faith; that few are taught by Scientific Demonstration; and that there are still fewer who can discover Truth for themselves. Did Minute Philosophers but reflect: How rarely Men are sway'd

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or governed by meer Ratiocination, and DIAL. how often by Faith, in the natural, or civil Concerns of the World! how little they know, and how much they believe! How uncommon it is to meet with a Man who argues justly, who is in Truth a Master of Reason, or walks by that Rule! How much better (as the World goes) Men are qualified to judge of Facts than of Reasonings, to receive Truth upon Testimony than to deduce it from Principles! How general a Spirit of Trust or Reliance runs through the whole Syftem of Life and Opinion! And at the same Time how feldom the dry Light of unprejudiced Nature is followed or to be found! I fay, did our thinking Men but bethink themselves of these Things, they would perhaps find it difficult to affign a good Reason, why Faith, which hath so great a Share in every Thing else, should yet have none in Religion. But to come more closely to your Point, Whether it was possible for Mankind to have known all Parts of the Christian Religion, besides Mysteries and positive Institutions, is not the Question between us; and that they actually did not know them, is too plain to be denied. This, perhaps, was for Want of making a due Use of Reason. But, as to the Usefulness of Revelation,

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VI. they could not know, or would not be at the Pains to know, the Doctrines Revealed. And as for those Doctrines which were too obscure to penetrate, or too sublime to reach, by Natural Reason; how far Mankind may be the better for them is more, I had almost said, than even you or Glaucus can tell.

XX. ALC. But whatever may be pretended as to obscure Doctrines and Dispensations, all this hath nothing to do with Prophecies; which, being altogether relative to Mankind, and the Events of this World, to which our Faculties are furely well enough proportioned, one might expect should be very clear, and fuch as might inform instead of puzzling EUPH. And yet it must be allowed that as fome Prophecies are clear, there are others very obscure: but left to my felf, I doubt I should never have inferred from thence that they were not Divine. In my own way of thinking I should have been apt to conclude, that the Prophecies we understand are a Proof for Inspiration: but that those we do not understand are no Proof against it. Inasmuch as for the latter our Ignorance or the Reserve of the Holy Spirit may account: but for the other

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other Nothing, for ought that I fee, can DIAL. account but Inspiration. ALC. Now I know feveral fagacious Men, who conclude very differently from you, to wit, that the one Sort of Prophecies are Nonfense, and the other contrived after the Events. Behold the Difference between a Man of free Thought and one of narrow Principles! EUPH. It feems then they reject the Revelations because they are obscure, and Daniel's Prophecies because they are clear. ALC. Either way a Man of Sense sees Cause to suspect there has been foul Play. EUPH. Your Men of Sense are, it seems, hard to please. ALC. Our Philosophers are Men of piercing Eyes. EUPH. I suppose such Men never make transient Judgments from tranfient Views, but always establish fixed Conclusions upon a thorough Inspection of Things. For my own part, I dare not engage with a Man, who has examined those Points so nicely, as it may be prefumed you have done: But I could name some eminent Writers of our own, now living, whose Books on the Subject of Prophecy have given great Satisfaction to Gentlemen, who pass for Men of Sense and Learning, here in the Country. ALC. You must know, Euphranor, I am not at Leisure to peruse the learned Writings of DiDIAL. Divines, on a Subject which a Man may fee through with half an Eye. To me it is fufficient, that the Point it felf is odd and out of the Road of Nature. For the rest, I leave them to dispute and settle among themselves, where to fix the precise Time when the Sceptre departed from Judab: or whether in Daniel's Prophecy of the Messiah we should compute by the Chaldaan or the Julian Year. My only Conclusion concerning all such Matters is, that I will never trouble my felf about them. EUPH. To an extraordinary Genius, who fees Things with half an Eye, I know not what to fay: But for the rest of Mankind, one would think it should be very rash in them to conclude, without much and exact Inquiry, on the unsafe Side of a Question which concerns their chief Interest. ALC. Mark it well: a true Genius in pursuit of Truth makes fwift Advances on the Wings of general Maxims, while little Minds creep and grovel amidst mean Particularities. I lay it down for a certain Truth: that by the fallacious Arts of Logic and Criticism, straining and forcing, palliating, patching and distinguishing, a Man may justify or make out any Thing: and this Remark, with one or two about Prejudice, faves me a world of Trouble. EUPH. You Alci-

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Alciphron, who foar fublime on strong DIAL. and free Pinions, vouchfafe to lend a VI. helping Hand to those whom you behold entangled in the Birdlime of Prejudice. For my part, I find it very possible to suppose Prophecy may be Divine, although there should be some Obscurity at this Distance, with respect to Dates of Time or Kinds of Years. You your felf own Revelation possible; and allowing this I can very eafily conceive it may be odd, and out of the Road of Nature. I can, without Amazement, meet in Holy Scripture divers Prophecies, whereof I do not fee the Completion, divers Texts I do not understand, divers Mysteries above my Comprehension, and Ways of God to me unaccountable. Why may not some Prophecies relate to Parts of History I am not well enough acquainted with, or to Events not yet come to pass? It seems to me that Prophecies unfathomed by the Hearer, or even the Speaker himself, have been afterward verified and underflood in the Event: and it is one of my Maxims, That, what hath been may be. Though I rub mine Eyes, and do mine utmost to extricate my self from Prejudice, yet it still feems very possible to me, that, what I do not, a more acute, more attentive, or more learned Man may understand:

At least thus much is plain: DIAL. derstand: the Difficulty of some Points or Passages doth not hinder the Clearness of others: and those Parts of Scripture which we cannot interpret, we are not bound to know the Sense of. What Evil or what Inconvenience, if we cannot comprehend what we are not obliged to comprehend, or if we cannot account for those Things which it doth not belong to us to account for? Scriptures not understood, at one Time, or by one Person, may be understood at another Time, or by other Persons. May we not perceive, by Retrospect on what is past, a certain Progress from darker to lighter, in the Series of the Divine Oeconomy towards Man? And may not future Events clear up fuch Points as at present exercise the Faith of Believers? Now, I cannot help thinking (fuch is the Force either of Truth or Prejudice) that in all this, there is nothing strained or forced, or which is not reasonable and natural to suppose.

XXI. ALC. Well, Euphranor, I will lend you a helping Hand, fince you defire it, but think fit to alter my Method: For you must know, the main Points of Christian Belief have been infused so early, and inculcated so often, by Nurses, Pæda-

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Pædagogues, and Priests: that, be the DIAL. Proofs ever so plain, it is a hard Matter to convince a Mind thus tinctured and stained, by arguing against Revealed Religion from its internal Characters, I shall therefore fet my felf to confider Things in another Light, and examine your Religion by certain external Characters or Circumstantials, comparing the System of Revelation with collateral Accounts of ancient Heathen Writers, and shewing how ill it confifts with them. Know then, that the Christian Revelation supposing the Jewish, it follows, that if the Jewish be destroyed, the Christian must of Course fall to the Ground. Now, to make short Work, I shall attack this Jewish Revelation in its Head. Tell me, are we not obliged, if we believe the Mosaic Account of Things, to hold the World was created not quite fix thousand Years EUPH. I grant we are. ALC. What will you fay now, if other ancient Records carry up the History of the World many thousand Years beyond this Period? What if the Ægyptians and Chinese have Accounts extending to thirty or forty thousand Years? What if the former of these Nations have observed twelve hundred Eclipses, during the space of forty eight thousand Years, before the Time of Alexander

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DIAL. ander the Great? What if the Chinese have also many Observations antecedent to the Yewish Account of the Creation? What if the Chaldwans had been observing the Stars for above four hundred thousand Years? And what shall we say if we have Successions of Kings and their Reigns, marked for feveral thousand Years before the Beginning of the World, affigned by Moses? Shall we reject the Accounts and Records of all other Nations, the most famous, ancient, and learned in the World, and preserve a blind Reverence for the Legislator of the Jews? EUPH. And pray if they deserve to be rejected, why should we not reject them? What if those monstrous Chronologies contain nothing but Names without Actions and manifest Fables? What if those pretended Observations of Ægyptians and Chaldaans were unknown or unregarded by ancient Astronomers? What if the Fesuits have shewn the Inconsistency of the like Chinese Pretentions with the Truth of Ephemerides? What if the most ancient Chinese Observations allow'd to be authentic, are those of two fixed Stars, one in the Winter Solftice, the other in the Vernal Equinox, in the Reign of their King Yao, which was fince the Flood *? ALC.

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^{*} Bianchini Histor. Univers. c. 17.

You must give me Leave to observe, the DIAL. Romish Missionaries are of small Credit in this Point. EUPH. But what Knowledge have we, or can we have, of those Chinese Affairs, but by their Means? The fame Persons that tell us of these Accounts refute them: if we reject their Authority in one Case, what Right have we to build upon it in another? ALC. When I confider that the Chinese have Annals of more than forty thousand Years, and that they are a learned ingenious and acute People, very curious and addicted to Arts and Sciences, I profess I cannot help paying some Regard to their Accounts of Time. EUPH. Whatever Advantage their Situation and political Maxims may have given them, it doth not appear they are so learned or fo acute in point of Science as the Europe-The general Character of the Chinese, if we may believe Trigaltius and other Writers, is that they are Men of a trifling and credulous Curiofity, addicted to fearch after the Philosophers Stone, and a Medicine to make Men immortal, to Astrology, Fortune-telling, and Presages Their Ignorance in Nature of all Kinds. and Mathematics is evident, from the great Hand the Jesuits make of that Kind of Knowledge among them. But what shall we think of those extraordinary Annals,

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DIAL. nals, if the very Chinese themselves give no Credit to them for more than three thousand Years before Jesus Christ? If they do not pretend to have begun to write History above four thousand Years ago? And if the oldest Books they have now extant in an intelligible Character, are not above two thousand Years old? One would think a Man of your Sagacity, fo apt to suspect every Thing out of the common Road of Nature, should not without the clearest Proof admit those Annals for authentic, which record fuch strange Things as the Sun's not setting for ten Days, and Gold raining three Days Tell me, Alciphron, can you together. really believe these Things without inquiring by what Means the Tradition was preserved, through what Hands it passed, or what Reception it met with, or who first committed it to Writing? ALC. To omit the Chinese and their Story, it will ferve my Purpose as well to build on the Authority of Manetho that learned Ægyptian Priest, who had such Opportunities of fearthing into the most ancient Accounts of Time, and copying into his Dynasties the most venerable and authentic Records inscribed on the Pillars of Hermes. EUPH. Pray, Alciphron, where were those Chronological Pillars

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to be feen? ALC. In the Seriadical Land. DIAL. EUPH. And where is that Country? ALC. I don't know. EUPH. How were those Records preserved for so many Ages down to the Time of this Hermes. who is faid to have been the first Inventor of Letters? ALC. I do not know. EUPH. Did any other Writers, before or fince Manetho, pretend to have feen, or transcribed, or known any Thing about these Pillars? ALC. Not that I know. EUPH. Or about the Place where they are faid to have been? ALC. If they did, it is more than I know. EUPH. Do the Greek Authors that went into Ægypt, and confulred the Ægyptian Priests, agree with these Accounts of Manetho? ALC. Suppose they do not. EUPH. Doth Diodorus, who lived fince Manetho, follow, cite, or so much as mention this same Manetho? ALC. What will you infer from all this? EUPH. If I did not know you and your Principles, and how vigilantly you guard against Imposture, I should infer that you were a very credu-For what can we call it but lous Man. Credulity to believe most incredible things on most slender Authority, such as Fragments, of an obscure Writer, disagreeing with all other Historians, supported by an obscure Authority of Hermes's Pillars, Vol. II.

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DIAL for which you must take his Word, and which contain Things fo improbable as Succeffions of Gods and Demi-gods, for many thousand Years, Vulcan alone having reigned nine Thousand? There is little in these venerable Dynasties of Manetho. befides Names and Numbers: and yet in that little we meet with very strange Things, that would be thought Romantick in another Writer: For instance, the Nile overflowing with Honey, the Moon grown bigger, a speaking Lamb, seventy Kings who reigned as many Days one after another, a King a Day *. If you are known, Alciphron, to give credit to these Things, I fear you will lose the Honour of being thought incredulous, ALC. And yet these ridiculous Fragments, as you would represent them, have been thought worth the Pains and Lucubrations of very learned Men. How can you account for the Work that the great 70feph Scaliger and Sir John Marsham make about them? EUPH. I do not pretend to To see Scaliger add anoaccount for it. ther Julian Period to make room for such Things as Manetho's Dynasties, and Sir John Marsham take so much learned Pains to piece, parch, and mend those obscure Fragments, to range them in Synchronisms,

* Scal. Can. Ifag. 1. 2.

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and try to adjust them with facred Chro-DIAL. nology, or make them consistent with VI. themselves and other Accounts, is to me very strange and unaccountable. Why they, or Eusebius, or your self, or any other learned Man should imagine those Things deserve any Regard I leave you to explain.

XXII. ALC. After all it is not easy to conceive what should move, not only Manetho, but also other Ægyptian Priests, long before his Time, to fet up fuch great Pretences to Antiquity, all which, however differing one from another, agree in this, that they overthrow the Mosaic His-How can this be accounted for without some real Foundation? What Point of Pleasure, or Profit, or Power, could fet Men on forging Successions of ancient Names, and Periods of Time for Ages before the World began? EUPH. Pray, Alciphron, is there any Thing so strange or fingular in this vain Humour of extending the Antiquity of Nations beyond the Truth? Hath it not been observed in most Parts of the World? Doth it not even in our own Times shew it felf, especially among those dependent and subdued People, who have little else to boast of. To pass over others of our FellowDIAL. Fellow-Subjects, who, in proportion as they are below their Neighbours in Wealth and Power, lay claim to a more remote Antiquity; are not the Pretentions of Irishmen in this Way known to be very great? If I may trust my Memory O Flaberty, in his Ogygia, mentions some Transactions in Ireland before the Flood. The fame Humour, and from the fame Cause, appears to have prevailed in Sicily, a Country, for some Centuries past, subject to the Dominion of Foreigners: during which Time, the Sicilians have published divers fabulous Accounts, concerning the Original and Antiquity of their Cities, wherein they vye with each other. It is pretended to be proved by ancient Inscriptions, whose Existence or Authority seems on a Level with that of Hermes's Pillars, that Palermo was founded in the Days of the Patriarch Isaac by a Colony of Hebrews, Phanicians, and Syrians, and that a Grandson of Esau had been Governor of a Tower subsisting within these two hundred Years in that City *. The Antiquity of Messina hath been carried still higher, by some who would have us think it was enlarged by Nimrod +. The like Pretentions are made by Catania, and

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^{*} Fazelli Hist. Sicul. decad. 1. 1. 8. † Reina Notizie Istoriche di Messina.

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other Towns of that Island, who have DIAL. found Authors of as good Credit as Manetho to support them. Now I should be glad to know why the Ægyptians, a fubdued People, may not probably be supposed to have invented fabulous Accounts from the same Motive, and like others valued themselves on extravagant Pretentions to Antiquity, when in all other Respects they were so much inferior to their Masters? That People had been fuccessively conquered by Æthiopians, Afsyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Grecians, before it appears that those wonderful Dynasties of Manetho and the Pillars of Hermes were ever heard of; as they had been by the two first of those Nations before the Time of Solon himself, the earliest Greek that is known to have confulted the Priests of Ægypt: Whose Accounts were fo extravagant that even the Greek Historians, though unacquainted with Holy Scripture, were far from giving an intire Credit to them. Herodotus making a Report upon their Authority, faith, Those to whom such Things feem credible may make the best of them, for himself declaring that it was his Purpose to write what he heard *. And both he and Diodorus do, on divers Occasions,

* Herodotus in Euterpe.

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DIAL shew the same Diffidence in the Narratives of those Ægyptian Priests. And as we observed of the Ægyptians, it is no less certain that the Phanicians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans were each a conquered and reduced People, before the rest of the World appear to have heard any Thing of their Pretensions to so remote Antiquity. CRI. But what Occasion is there to be at any Pains to account for the Humour of fabulous Writers? Is it not fufficient to fee that they relate Absurdities: that they are unsupported by any foreign Evidence: that they do not appear to have been in Credit, even among their own Countrymen, and that they are inconfistent one with another? That Men fhould have the Vanity to impose on the World by false Accounts, is nothing strange: it is much more so, that after what hath been done towards undeceiving the World by fo many learned Critics, there should be Men found capable of being abused by those paltry Scraps of Manetho, Berofus, Ctefias, or the like fabulous or counterfeit Writers. ALC. Give me Leave to observe, those learned Critics may prove to be Ecclesiastics, perhaps fome of them Papists. CRI. What do you think of Sir Isaac Newton, was he either Papist or Ecclesiastic? Perhaps

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haps you may not allow him to have DIAL. been in Sagacity, or Force of Mind, e- VI. qual to the great Men of the Minute Philosophy: But it cannot be denied that he had read and thought much upon the Subject, and that the Result of his Inquiry was a perfect Contempt of all those celebrated Rivals to Moses. ALC. It hath been observed by ingenious Men, that Sir Isaac Newton, though a Layman, was deeply prejudiced, witness his great Regard to the Bible. CRI. And the fame may be faid of Mr. Locke, Mr. Boyle, Lord Bacon, and other famous Laymen, who, however knowing in fome Points, must nevertheless be allowed not to have attained that keen Discernment, which is the peculiar Distinction of your Sect.

XXIII. But perhaps there may be other Reasons beside Prejudice, to incline a Man to give Moses the Preference, on the Truth of whose History the Government, Manners, and Religion of his Countrymen were founded and framed; of whose History there are manifest Traces in the most ancient Books and Traditions of the Gentiles, particularly of the Brachmans and Persees; whose History is confirmed by the late Invention of Arts G 4

VI.

DIAL and Sciences, the gradual Peopling of the World, the very Names of ancient Nations, and even by the Authority and Arguments of that renowned Philosopher Lucretius, who, on other Points, is fo much admired and followed by those of your Sect. Not to mention that the continual Decrease of Fluids, the Sinking of Hills, and the Retardation of Planetary Motions afford so many natural Proofs, which shew this World had a Beginning; as the Civil or Historical Proofs abovementioned do plainly point out this Beginning, to have been about the Time affigned in Holy Scripture. After all which I beg Leave to add one Observati-To any one who confiders that, on digging into the Earth, such Quantities of Shells, and, in some Places, Bones and Horns of Animals are found, found and intire after having lain there in all Probability some thousands of Years; it should feem probable, that Gems, Medals, and Implements in Metal or Stone, might have lasted intire, buried under Ground forty or fifty thousand Years, if the World had been so old, How comes it then to pass that no Remains are found, no Antiquities of those numerous Ages preceding the Scripture Accounts of Time; no Fragments of Buildings, no publick

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publick Monuments, no Intaglias, Cam-DIAL. meoes, Statues, Baffo Relievos, Medals, Inscriptions, Utenfils, or Artificial Works of any kind are ever discovered, which might bear Testimony to the Existence of those mighty Empires, those Successions of Monarchs, Heroes, and Demi-gods, for fo many thousand Years? Let us look forward and suppose ten or twenty thoufand Years to come; during which Time we will suppose, that Plagues, Famines, Wars, and Earthquakes shall have made great Havock in the World; is it not highly probable that at the End of fuch Period, Pillars, Vases, and Statues now in-being of Granite, or Porphyry, or Jafper, (Stones of fuch Hardness, as we know them to have lasted two thousand Years above Ground, without any confiderable Alteration) would bear Record of these and past Ages? Or, that some of our current Coins might then be dug up, or old Walls and the Foundations of Buildings shew themselves, as well as the Shells and Stones of the Primæval World are preserved down to our Times? To me it feems to follow from these Considerations, which common Sense and Experience make all Men Judges of, that we may fee good Reason to conclude, the World was created about the Time recorded in

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no lick VI. Thing so extraordinary as the Creation of this World, it should feem that we admit something strange, and odd, and new to Humane Apprehension, beyond any other Miracle whatsoever.

XXIV. Alcipbron fate musing and made no Answer, whereupon Lysicles expressed himself in the following Manner. I must own I should rather suppose with Lucretius, that the World was made by Chance, and that Men grew out of the Earth, like Pompions, than pin my Faith on those wretched fabulous Fragments of Oriental History. And as for the learned Men, who have taken pains to illustrate and piece them together, they appear to me no better than so many musty Pedants. An ingenious Free-thinker may, perhaps, now and then make some Use of their Lucubrations, and play one Abfurdity against another. But you are not, therefore, to think, he pays any real Regard to the Authority of fuch apocryphal Writers, or believes one Syllable of the Chinese, Babylonian, or Ægyptian Traditions. If we feem to give them a Preference before the Bible, it is only because they are not established by Law. This is my plain Sense of the Matter, and I dare say it is the general Sense of our Sect; who are

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too rational to be in earnest on such Trifles, DIAL. though they fometimes give Hints of deep Erudition, and put on a grave Face to divert themselves with Bigots. ALC. Since Lyficles will have it fo, I am content not to build on Accounts of Time preceding the Mosaic. I must nevertheless beg Leave to observe, there is another Point of a different Nature, against which there do not lie the same Exceptions, that deserves to be confidered, and may serve our Purpose as well. I presume it will be allowed that Historians, treating of Times within the Mofaic Account, ought by impartial Men to be placed on the same Foot with Moses. It may therefore. be expected, that those, who pretend to vindicate his Writings, should reconcile them with parallel Accounts of other Authors, treating of the same Times, Things, and Persons. And, if we are not attached fingly to Moses, but take our Notions from other Writers, and the Probability of Things, we shall see good Cause to believe, the Jews were only a Crew of leprous Ægyptians, driven from their Country on Account of that loathfome Distemper: and that their Religion, pretended to have been delivered from Heaven at Mount Singi, was in Truth learned in Ægypt, and brought from thence. CRI.

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DIAL. CRI. Not to infift, on what cannot be denied, that an Historian writing of his own Times is to be believed, before others who treat of the same Subject several Ages after, it feems to me that it is abfurd to expect we should reconcile Mojes with profane Historians, till you have first reconcil'd them one with another. In answer therefore to what you observe, I defire you would confider in the first Place, that Manetho, Chæremon, and Lyfimachus had published inconsistent Accounts of the Yews, and their going forth from Ægypt*: In the fecond place, that their Language is a plain Proof they were not of Ægyptian, but either of Phænician, of Syrian, or of Chaldean Original: and in the third place, that it doth not feem very probable to suppose, their Religion, the Basis or Fundamental Principle of which was the Worship of one only Supreme God, and the principal Defign of which was to abolish Idolatry, could be derived from Ægypt, the most Idolatrous It must be owned, the of all Nations. separate Situation and Institutions of the Yews, occasioned their being treated by fome Foreigners, with great Ignorance and Contempt of them and their Original. But Strabo, who is allowed to have been a

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^{*} Joseph. contra Apicn. l. 1.

judicious and inquisitive Writer, though DIAL. he was not acquainted with their true VI. History, makes more honourable mention of them. He relates that Moses, with many other Worshippers of one infinite God, not approving the Image Worship of the Egyptians and other Nations, went out from Egypt and settled in Jerusalem, where they built a Temple to one only God without Images*.

XXV. ALC. We who affert the Cause of Liberty against Religion, in these later Ages of the World, lie under great Difadvantages, from the Loss of ancient Books, which cleared up many Points to the Eyes of those great Men, Celjus, Porphyry, and Julian, which at a greater Distance and with less Help cannot so easily be made out by us: but, had we those Records, I doubt not we might demolish the whole System at once. CRI. And yet I make some Doubt of this; because those great Men, as you call them, with all those Advantages could not do it. ALC. That must needs have been owing to the Dulness and Stupidity of the World in those Days, when the Art of Reasoning was not fo much known and cultivated as of late: But those Men of true Genius saw through

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^{*} Strab. 1. 16.

DIAL the Deceit themselves, and were very clear in their Opinion, which convinces me they had good reason on their Side. CRI. And vet that great Man Celsus seems to have had very flight and inconstant Notions: one while, he talks like a thorough Epicurean; another, he admits Miracles, Prophecies, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments. What think you, Alciphron, is it not fomething capricious in fo great a Man, among other Advantages which he ascribes to Brutes above Humane Kind, to suppose they are Magicians and Prophets; that they have a nearer Commerce and Union with the Divinity; that they know more than Men; and that Elephants, in particular, are of all others most religious Animals and strict Observers of an Oath*. ALC. A great Genius will be sometimes whimfical. But what do you fay to the Emperor Julian, was not he an extraordinary Man? CRI. He feems by his Writings to have been lively and fa-Further, I make no Difficulty tyrical. of owning that he was a generous, temperate, gallant, and facetious Emperor: But at the same time it must be allowed, because his own Heathen Panegyrist Ammianus Marcellinus + allows it, that he was

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^{*} Origen. contra Celsum. 1. 4. † Am. Marcellin. 1. 25.

a prating, light, vain, superstitious Sort DIAL. of Man. And therefore his Judgment or Authority can be but of small Weight with those, who are not prejudiced in his Favour. ALC. But of all the great Men who wrote against Revealed Religion, the greatest without question was that truly great Man Porphyry, the Loss of whose invaluable Work can never be fufficiently lamented. This profound Philosopher went to the Bottom and Original of Things. He most learnedly confuted the Scriptures, shew'd the Absurdity of the Mofaic Accounts, undermined and exposed the Prophecies, and ridiculed allegorical Interpretations *. The Moderns, it must be owned, have done great Things and shewn themselves able Men: yet I cannot but regret the Loss of what was done by a Person of such vast Abilities. and who lived fo much nearer the Fountain-head; though his Authority furvives his Writings, and must still have its Weight with impartial Men, in spite of the Enemies of Truth. CRI. Porphyry, I grant, was a thorough Infidel, though he appears by no means to have been incredulous. It feems he had a great Opinion of Wizards and Necromancers, and be-

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^{*} Luc. Holstenius de vita & scriptis Porphyrii.

DIAL. lieved the Mysteries, Miracles, and Prophecies of Theurgists and Ægyptian Priests. He was far from being an Enemy to obscure Jargon, and pretended to extraordinary Extasses. In a word, this great. Man appears to have been as unintelligible as a Schoolman, as fuperstitious as a Monk, and as fanatical as any Quietist or Quaker: and, to compleat his Character as a Minute Philosopher, he was under strong Temptations to lay violent Hands on himfelf. We may frame a Notion of this Patriarch of Infidelity, by his judicious Way of thinking upon other Points as well as the Christian Religion. fagacious was he as to find out, that the Souls of Infects, when separated from their Bodies, become rational: that Dæmons of a thousand Shapes asfift in making Philtrums and Charms, whose spiritual Bodies are nourished and fattened by the Streams of Libations That the Ghosts of and Sacrifices: those, who died violent Deaths, use to haunt and appear about their Sepulchres. This same egregious Philosopher adviseth a wife Man not to eat Flesh, lest the impure Soul of the Brute that was put to violent Death should enter, along with the Flesh, into those who eat it. He adds, as a Mat-

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^{*} Vide

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a Matter of Fact confirmed by many Ex-DIAL. periments, that those who would infinu- VI. ate into themselves the Souls of such Anias have the Gift of foretelling Things to come, need only eat a principal Part, the Heart, for instance, of a Stag or a Mole, and so receive the Soul of the Animal, which will prophefy in them like a God *. No wonder if Men whose Minds were preoccupied by Faith and Tenets of fuch a peculiar Kind, should be averse from the Reception of the Gospel. Upon the whole, we defire to be excused if we do not pay the fame Deference to the Judgment of Men, that appear to us whimfical, fuperstitious, weak, and vifionary, which those impartial Gentlemen do, who admire their Talents, and are proud to tread in their Footsteps. ALC. Men see Things in different Views: what one admires another contemns: it is even possible for a prejudiced Mind, whose Attention is turned towards the Faults and Blemishes of Things, to fanfy some Shadow of Defect in those great Lights, which in our own Days have enlightened, and still continue to enlighten the World.

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XXVI.

Vide Porphyrium de abstinentia, de sacrificiis, de diis,

DIAL. XXVI. But pray tell me, Crito, what you think of Josephus? He is allowed to have been a Man of Learning and Judgment. He was himself an Asserter of Revealed Religion. And Christians, when his Authority ferves their Turn, are used to cite him with Respect. CRI. All this I acknowledge. ALC. Must it not then feem very strange, and very suspicious to every impartial Inquirer, that this learned Yew writing the History of his own Country, of that very Place, and those very Times, where and when Jejus Christ made his Appearance, should yet say nothing of the Character, Miracles, and Doctrine of that Extraordinary Person? Some ancient Christians were so sensible of this, that, to make amends, they inferted a famous Passage in that Historian; which Imposture hath been sufficiently detected by able Critics in the last Age. CRI. Though there are not wanting able Critics on the other fide of the Question, yet, not to enter upon the Discussion of that celebrated Passage, I am content to give you all you can defire, and suppose it not genuine, but the pious Fraud of some wrongheaded Christian, who could not brook the Omission in Josephus: But this will never make such Omission a real Objection against Christianity. Nor is there, for

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for ought I can fee, any thing in it where-DIAL. on to ground either Admiration or Suf- VI. picion; inasmuch as it should seem very natural, supposing the Gospel Account exactly true, for Josephus to have said nothing of it; confidering that the View of that Writer was to give his Country some Figure in the Eye of the World, which had been greatly prejudiced against the Yews, and knew little of their History. to which end the Life and Death of our Saviour would not in any wife have conduced; confidering that Josephus could not have been an Eye-Witness of our Saviour, or his Miracles; confidering that he was a Pharisee of Quality and Learning. foreign as well as Jewish, one of great Employment in the State, and that the Gofpel was preached to the Poor; that the first Instruments of, spreading it, and the first Converts to it were mean and illiterate, that it might not feem the Work of Man, or beholden to Humane Interest or Power; confidering the general Prejudice of the Jews, who expected in the Messiah a temporal and conquering Prince; which Prejudice was fo strong, that they chose rather to attribute our Saviour's Miracles to the Devil, than to acknowledge him to be the Christ: Considering also the hellish Disorder and Confusion of the Jewish H 2 State

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DIAL. State in the Days of Josephus: when Mens Minds were filled and aftonished with unparallel'd Wars, Diffensions, Masfacres, and Seditions of that devoted Peo-Laying all these things together, I do not think it strange, that such a Man, writing with fuch a View, at fuch a Time, and in fuch Circumstances, should omit to describe our Blessed Saviour's Life and Death, or to mention his Miracles, or to take notice of the State of the Christian Church, which was then as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, beginning to take Root and germinate. And this will feem still less strange, if it be confidered, that the Apofiles in a few Years after our Saviour's Death departed from Jerusalem, setting themselves to convert the Gentiles, and were dispersed throughout the World; that the Converts in Jerusalem were, not only of the meanest of the People, but also few; the three thousand, added to the Church in one Day upon Peter's preaching in that City, appearing to have been not Inhabitants but Strangers from all parts affembled to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost; and that all the Time of Josephus, and for several Years after, during a Succession of fifteen Bishops, the Christians at Jerusalem obferved the Mosaic Law*, and were conse-

^{*} Sulp. Sever. Sacr. Hift. 1. 2. & Euseb. Chron. lib. poster. quently,

quently, in outward Appearance, one Peo-DIAL. ple with the rest of the Jews, which must have made them less observable. I would' fain know what Reason we have to suppose, that the Gospel, which in its first Propagation seemed to overlook the great or confiderable Men of this World, might not also have been overlooked by them, as a thing not fuited to their Apprehenfions and way of thinking? Besides, in those early Times might not other learned Jews, as well as + Gamaliel, suspend their Judgment of this new way, as not knowing what to make or fay of it, being on one hand unable to quit the Notions and Traditions in which they were brought up, and, on the other, not daring to relift or speak against the Gospel, lest they should be found to fight against God? Surely at all Events, it could never be expected, that an unconverted Few should give the fame Account of the Life, Miracles, and Doctrine of Jesus Christ, as might become a Christian to have given: Nor on the other hand was it at all improbable, that a Man of Sense should beware to lessen or traduce what, for ought he knew, might have been a heavenly Dispensation: between which two Courses the middle was to fay nothing, but pass it over in a

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DIAL.doubtful or a respectful Silence. And it is observable, that where this Historian occasionally mentions Jesus Christ in his Account of St. James's Death, he doth it without any Reflection, or faying either Good or Bad, though at the same time he shews a Regard for the Apostle. servable, I say, that speaking of Jesus his Expression is, who was called the Christ, not who pretended to be the Christ, or who was falfly called the Christ, but simply าซี กรางเมื่อ Xeige*. It is evident Josephus knew there was fuch a Man as Jesus, and that he was faid to be the Christ, and yethe condemns neither him nor his Followers; which to me feems an Argument in their favour. Certainly if we suppose Josephus to have known or been perfuaded that he was an Impostor, it will be difficult to account for his not faying so in plain terms. But if we suppose him in Gamaliel's way of thinking, who fuspended his Judgment, and was afraid of being found to fight against God, it should seem natural for him to behave in that very manner, which according to you makes against our Faith, but I verily think makes for it. But what if Josephus had been a Bigot, or even a Sadducee, an Infidèl, an Atheist? then! we readily grant there might have

* Jof. Ant. 1, 20. c. 8.

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been Persons of Rank, Politicians, Gene-DIAL. rals, and Men of Letters, then as well as VI. now, Jews as well as Englishmen, who believed no Revealed Religion: And that fome fuch Persons might possibly have heard of a Man in low Life, who performed Miracles by Magic, without informing themselves, or perhaps ever inquiring, about his Mission and Doctrine. Upon the whole, I cannot comprehend why any Man should conclude against the Truth of the Gospel, from Josephus's omitting to fpeak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it. Had the first Christians been Chief Priests and Rulers, or Men of Science and Learning, like Philo and Josephus, it might perhaps with better Colour have been objected, that their Religion was of Humane Contrivance, than now that it hath pleased God by weak things to confound the Strong. This I think fufficiently accounts, why in the beginning the Gospel might overlook or be overlooked by Men of a certain Rank and Character.

XXVII. ALC. And yet it feems an odd Argument in proof of any Doctrine, that it was preached by simple People to simple People. CRI. Indeed if there was no other Attestation to the Truth of the H 4 Christian

DIAL. Christian Religion, this must be owned a VI. very weak one. But if a Doctrine begun by Instruments, mean, as to all Humane Advantages, and making its first Progress among those, who had neither Wealth nor Art nor Power to grace or encourage it, should in a short time by its own innate Excellency, the mighty Force of Miracles, and the Demonstration of the Spirit, not only without, but against, all worldly Motives spread through the World, and subdue Men of all Ranks and Conditions of Life, would it not be very unreasonable to reject or suspect it, for the want of Humane Means? And might not this with much better reason be thought an Argument of its coming from God? ALC. But still an inquisitive Man will want the Testimony of Men of Learning and Knowledge, CRI. But from the first Century onwards, there was never wanting the Testimony of fuch Men who wrote learnedly in defence of the Christian Religion, who lived, many of them, when the Memory of things was fresh, who had Abilities to judge and Means to know, and who gave the clearest Proofs of their Conviction and Sincerity. ALC. But all the while these Men were Christians, prejudiced Christians, and therefore their Testimony is to be sufpected. CRI. It feems then you would have

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have Jews or Heathens attest to the Truths DI AL. of Christianity. ALC. That is the very Thing I want. CRI. But how can this be? or if it could, would not any rational Man be apt to suspect such Evidence, and ask, how it was possible for a Man really to believe fuch things himself, and not become a Christian? The Apostles and first Converts were themselves Jews, and brought up in a Veneration for the Law of Moses, and in all the Prejudices of that People: many Fathers, Christian Philosophers, and learned Apologists for the Faith, who had been bred Gentiles, were without doubt imbued with Prejudices of Education: and if the Finger of God and Force of Truth converted both the one and the other from Judaism or Gentilism, in spite of their Prejudices to Christianity, is not their Testimony so much the stronger? You have then the Suffrages of both Fews and Gentiles, attesting to the Truth of our Religion, in the earliest Ages. But to expect or defire the Attestation of Jews remaining Jews, or of Gentiles remaining Gentiles, seems unreasonable: nor can it be imagined that the Testimony of Men, who were not converted themselves, should be the likeliest to convert others. We have indeed the Testimony of Heathen Writers to prove, That about the time of our

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DIAL. our Saviour's Birth, there was a general Expectation in the East of a Messiab or Prince, who should found a new Dominion: That there were fuch People as Christians: That they were cruelly persecuted and put to Death: That they were innocent and holy in Life and Worship: And that there did really exist in that time, certain Persons and Facts mentioned in the New Testament: and for other Points, we have learned Fathers, feveral of whom had been, as I already observed, bred Heathens, to attest their Truth. ALC. For my part, I have no great Opinion of the Capacity or Learning of the Fathers, and many learned Men, especially of the Reformed Churches abroad, are of the same mind, which saves me the trouble of looking my felf into their voluminous Writings. CRI. I shall not take upon me to fay, with the Minute Philosopher Pomponatius*, that Origen, Bafil, Augustine, and divers other Fathers, were equal to Plato, Aristotle, and the greatest of the Gentiles in Humane Knowledge. But, if I may be allowed to make a Judgment from what I have feen of their Writings, I should think several of them Men of great Parts, Eloquence, and Learning, and much superior to those who seem to undervalue them. Without any Affront to

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^{*} Lib. de immortalitate animæ.

certain modern Critics or Translators, DIAL. Erasmus may be allowed a Man of fine VI. Taste, and a fit Judge of Sense and good Writing, though his Judgment in this Point was very different from theirs. Some of our Reformed Brethren, because the Romanists attribute too much, seem to have attributed too little to them, from a very usual, though no very judicious Opposition: which is apt to lead Men to remark Defects, without making proper Allowances, and to say things which neither Piety, Candour, nor good Sense require them to say.

XXVIII. ALC. But though I should acknowledge, that a concurring Testimony of many learned and able Men throughout the first Ages of Christianity may have its Weight, yet when I consider the great number of Forgeries and Hæresies that fprung up in those Times, it very much weakens their Credit. CRI. Pray, Alciphron, would it be allowed a good Argument in the Mouth of a Papist against the Reformation, that many abfurd Sects sprung up at the same time with it? Are we to wonder, that, when good Seed is fowing, the Enemy should fow Tares? But at once to cut off several Objections, let us suppose in fact, what you do not deny possible, that there is a God, a Devil, and a Revelation from

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DIAL. from Heaven committed to Writing many Centuries ago. Do but take a view of Humane Nature, and confider, what would probably follow upon fuch a Supposition: and whether it is not very likely, there should be Half-believers, mistaken Bigots, holy Frauds, ambitious, interested, disputing, conceited, schismatical, hæretical, abfurd Men among the Profesfors of such Revealed Religion, as well as after a course of Ages, various Readings, Omissions, Transpositions, and Obscurities in the Text of the facred Oracles? And if fo, I leave you to judge, whether it be reasonable to make those Events an Objection against the Being of a Thing, which would probably and naturally follow upon the Supposal of its Being. ALC. After all, fay what you will, this Variety of Opinions must needs shake the Faith of a reasonable Man. Where there are so many different Opinions on the same Point, it is very certain they cannot all be true, but it is certain they may all be false. And the Means to find out the Truth! When a Man of Sense sets about this Inquiry, he finds himself on a sudden startled and amused with hard Words and knotty Questions. This makes him abandon the Pursuit, thinking the Game not worth the Chace. CRI. But would not this Man of Sense do well to consider, it must

must : divine lies? partia would defire Law, have 1 been a Chica admit just N Profe haps 1 Anima Causes by the moist by me not his an Ag can it which in tha instanc Parace Questi grown

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must argue want of Discernment, to reject DIAL. divine Truths for the fake of Humane Follies? Use but the same Candour and Impartiality in treating of Religion, that you would think proper on other Subjects. We defire no more, and expect no less. Law, in Physic, in Politics, wherever Men have refined, is it not evident they have been always apt to run into Disputes and Chicane? But will that hinder you from admitting there are many good Rules and just Notions, and useful Truths in all those Professions. Physicians may dispute, perhaps vainly and unintelligibly, about the Animal System: They may affign different Causes of Distempers, some explaining them by the elementary Qualities, hot and cold, moist and dry, others by chymical, others by mechanical Principles: Yet this doth not hinder but the Bark may be good for an Ague, and Rhubarb for a Flux. can it be inferred from the different Sects, which from time to time have fprung up in that Profession, the Dogmatic, for instance, Empiric, Methodic, Galenic, Paracelfian, or the hard Words and knotty Questions and idle Theories which have grown from them, or been engrafted on them, that therefore we should deny the Circulation of the Blood, or reject their excellent Rules about Exercise, Air, and Diet. ALC.

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DIAL. ALC. It feems you would fcreen Religion by the Example of other Professions, all which have produced Sects and Disputes as well as Christianity, which may in it self be true and useful, notwithstanding many false and fruitless Notions engrafted on it by the Wit of Man. Certainly if this had been observed or believed by many acute Reasoners, they would never have made the Multiplicity of Religious Opinions and Controversies, an Argument against Religion in general. CRI. How fuch an obvious Truth should escape Men of Sense and Inquiry I leave you to account: But I can very eafily account for gross Mistakes in those, who pass for Free-thinkers, without ever thinking: or, if they do think, whose Meditations are employ'd on other Points of a very different Nature, from a ferious and impartial Inquiry about Religion.

XXIX. But to return: What or where is the Profession of Men, who never split into Schisms, or never talk Nonsense? Is it not evident, that out of all the kinds of Knowledge, on which the Humane Mind is employ'd, there grow certain Excrescences, which may be pared off like the Clippings of Hair or Nails in the Body, and with no worse Consequence. Whatever Bigots or Enthusiasts, whatever notional

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nal or scholastic Divines may say or think, DIAL. it is certain the Faith derived from Christ and his Apostles, was not a piece of empty Sophistry: They did not deliver and transmit down to us κενων απάτην but γυμνω γνώμω, to use the Expression of a holy Confessor *. And to pretend to demolish their Foundation for the sake of Humane Superstructure, be it Hay or Stubble or what it will, is no Argument of just Thought or Reason; any more than it is of Fairness, to suppose a doubtful Sense fixed, and argue from one fide of the Question in disputed Points. Whether, for instance, the beginning of Genesis is to be underflood in a literal or allegorical Sense? Whether the Book of Job be an History or a Parable? Being Points disputed between Christians, an Infidel can have no right to argue from one fide of the Question in those or the like Cases. This or that Tenet of a Sect, this or that controverted Notion is not what we contend for at present, but the general Faith taught by Christ and his Apostles, and preserved by universal and perpetual Tradition in all the Churches down to our own Times. To tax or strike at this Divine Doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the Speculations and Disputes of curious

^{*} Socr. Hiftor, Ecclef. 1. 1.

DIAL. Men, is in my Mind an Absurdity of the fame kind, as it wou'd be to cut down a fine Tree yielding Fruit and Shade, because its Leaves afforded Nourishment to Caterpillers, or because Spiders may now and then weave Cobwebs among the Branches. ALC. To divide and diftinguish would take time. We have feveral Gentlemen very capable of judging in the groß, but that want Attention for irksome and dry Studies or minute Inquiries. To which as it would be very hard to oblige Men against their Will, so it must be a great Wrong to the World, as well as themfelves, to debar them from the Right of deciding according to their natural Sense of things. CRI. It were to be wished those capable Men would employ their Judgment and Attention on the fame Ob-If theological Inquiries are unpalajects. table, the Field of Nature is wide. How many Discoveries to be made! How many Errors to be corrected in Arts and Sciences! How many Vices to be reformed in Life and Manners! Why do Men fingle out fuch Points as are innocent and useful, when there are so many pernicious Mistakes to be amended? Why fet themselves to deftroy the Hopes of Humane Kind and Encouragements to Virtue? Why delight to judge where they difdain to inquire? Why

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not employ their noble Talents on the Lon-DIAL. gitude or perpetual Motion? ALC. I wonder you should not see the Difference between Points of Curiofity and Religion. Those employ only Men of a Genius or Humour fuited to them: But all Mankind have a right to cenfure, and are concerned to judge of these, except they will blindly submit to be governed, by the stale Wisdom of their Ancestors and the established Laws of their Country. CRI. It should feem, if they are concerned to judge, they are not less concerned to examine before ALC. But after all the Exathey judge. mination and Inquiry that mortal Man can make about Revealed Religion, it is impossible to come at any rational fure footing.

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XXX. There is, indeed, a deal of specious Talk about Faith sounded upon Miracles: But when I examine this Matter thoroughly, and trace Christian Faith up to its Original, I find it rests upon much Darkness and Scruple and Uncertainty. Instead of Points evident or agreeable to Humane Reason, I find a wonderful Narrative of the Son of God tempted in the Wilderness by the Devil, a thing utterly unaccountable, without any End, or Use, or Reason whatsoever. I meet with strange Vol II.

DIAL. Histories of Apparitions of Angels and Voices from Heaven, with furprifing accounts of Dæmoniacs, things quite out of the Road of common Sense or Observation. with feveral incredible Feats said to have been done by Divine Power, but more probably the Inventions of Men: nor the less likely to be so, because I cannot pretend to fay with what View they were invented. Defigns deeply laid are dark, and the less we know the more we suspect: But, admitting them for true, I shall not allow them to be miraculous, until I thoroughly know the Power of what are called fecond Causes and the Force of Magic CRI. You feem, Alciphron, to analyse not Faith, but Infidelity, and trace it to its Principles; which, from your own Account, I collect to be dark and doubtful Scruples and Surmises, Hastiness in judging and Narrowness in thinking, grounded on a fanciful Notion which over-rates the litle Scantling of your own Experience, and on real Ignorance of the Views of Providence, and of the Qualities, Operations, and mutual Respects of the several kinds of Beings, which are, or may be, for ought you know, in the Universe. obscure, uncertain, conceited, and conjectural are the Principles of Infidelin Whereas on the other hand, the Principle

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of Faith feem to me Points plain and DIAL clear. It is a clear Point, that this Faith VI. in Christ was spread abroad throughout the World foon after his Death. It is a clear Point, that this was not effected by humane Learning, Politics, or Power. It is a clear Point, that in the early Times of the Church there were feveral Men of Knowledge and Integrity, who embraced this Faith not from any, but against all, temporal Motives. It is a clear Point, that, the nearer they were to the Fentainhead, the more Opportunity they had to fatisfy themselves, as to the Truth of those Facts which they believed. It is a clear Point, that the less Interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of Evidence to convince them. It is a clear Point, that they relied on the Authority of those who declared themselves Eye-witnesses of the Miracles and Resurrection of Christ. It is a clear Point, that those professed Eye-witnesses suffer'd much for this their Attestation, and finally sealed it with their Blood. It is a clear Point, that these Witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the World, spread more Light, preached purer Morals, and did more Benefit to Mankind, than all the Philosophers and Sages put together. These Points appear to me clear and fure, and, being

DIAL.being allow'd fuch, they are plain, just, VI. and reasonable Motives of Assent: They stand upon no fallacious Ground, they contain nothing beyond our Sphere, neither supposing more Knowledge nor other Faculties than we are really Masters of: and if they should not be admitted for morally certain, as I believe they will by fair and unprejudiced Inquirers, yet the allowing them to be only probable is sufficient to stop the Mouth of an Infidel. plain Points, I fay, are the Pillars of our Faith, and not those obscure ones by you fupposed; which are in truth the unfound, uncertain Principles of Infidelity, toa rash, prejudiced, and affuming Spirit. To raise an Argument, or answer an Objection, from hidden Powers of Nature or Magic is groping in the dark: But by the evident Light of Sense, Men might be fufficiently certified of fensible Effects, and Matters of Fact, fuch as the Miracles and Refurrection of Christ; and the Testimony of such Men might be transmitted to After-ages, with the same moral Certainty as other historical Narrations: and those same miraculous Facts, compared by Reason with the Doctrines they were brought to prove, may afford to an unbiaffed Mind strong Indications of their coming from God, or a superior Principle, whose Goodness retrieved

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trieved the Moral World, whose Power DIAL. commanded the natural, and whose Providence extended over both. Give me leave to fay, that nothing dark, nothing incomprehensible, or mysterious, or unaccountable, is the Ground or Motive, the Principle or Foundation, the Proof or Reason of our Faith, although it may be the Object of it. For it must be owned, that, if by clear and fure Principles we are rationally led to believe a Point less clear; we do not therefore reject fuch Point, because it is mysterious to conceive, or difficult to account for; nor would it be right so to do. As for Jews and Gentiles, anciently attributing our Saviour's Miracles to Magic, this is so far from being a Proof against them, that to me it seems rather a Proof of the Facts, without disproving the Cause to which we ascribe them. As we do not pretend to know the Nature and Operations of Damons, the History, Laws, and System of rational Beings, and the Schemes or Views of Providence, fo far as to account for every Action and Appearance recorded in the Gospel: so neither do you know enough of those Things, to be able from that Knowledge of yours to object against Accounts so well attested. an easy Matter to raise Scruples upon I 3 many

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DIAL. many authentic Parts of Civil History, which, requiring a more perfect Knowledge of Facts, Circumstances, and Councils, than we can come at to explain them, must be to us inexplicable. And this is still more easy with respect to the History of Nature; in which, if Surmises were admitted for Proofs against Things odd, strange, and unaccountable; if our scanty Experience were made the Rule and Measure of Truth, and all those Phænomena rejected, that we, through Ignorance of the Principles, and Laws, and System of Nature, could not explain; we should indeed make Discoveries, but it would be only of our own Blindness and Prefumption. And why Men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common Points, in Things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible World, and its Mysteries, is to me a Point utterly unaccountable by all the Rules of Logic and good Sense. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot help thinking there are Points sufficiently plain, and clear, and full, whereon a Man may ground a reafonable Faith in Christ: but that the Attacks of Minute Philosophers against this Faith are grounded upon Darkness, Ignorance, and Presumption. ALC.

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I doubt I shall still remain in the dark DIAL. as to the Proofs of the Christian Religi- VI. on, and always presume there is nothing in them.

XXXI. For how is it possible, at this remote Distance, to arrive at any Knowledge, or frame any Demonstration about it? CRI. What then? Knowledge, I grant, in a strict Sense cannot be had without Evidence or Demonstration: but probable Arguments are a fufficient Ground of Faith. Who ever supposed that scientifical Proofs were necessary to make a Christian? Faith alone is required: and provided that, in the main and upon the whole, Men are perfuaded, this faving Faith may confift with some Degrees of Obscurity, Scruple, and Error. For although the Light of Truth be unchangeable, and the same in its eternal Source, the Father of Lights: Yet, with respect to us, it is variously weakened and obscured, by passing through a long Distance or gross Medium, where it is intercepted, distorted, or tinctured by the Prejudices and Passions of Men. But all this notwithstanding, he that will use his Eyes may fee enough for the Purposes either of Nature, or of Grace; though by a Light, dimmer indeed, or clearer, I 4

DIAL according to the Place, or the Distance, or the Hour, or the Medium. And it will be fufficient, if fuch Analogy appears between the Dispensations of Grace and Nature, as may make it probable (although much should be unaccountable in both) to suppose them derived from the fame Author, and the Workmanship of one and the same Hand. ALC. Those who faw and touched and handled Fefus Christ after his Resurrection, if there were any fuch, may be faid to have feen by a clear Light: But to us the Light is very dim, and yet it is expected we thould believe this Point as well as they. my part, I believe, with Spinofa, that Christ's Death was Literal, but his Refurrection Allegorical *. CRI. And for my part, I can fee nothing in this celebrated Infidel, that should make me defert Matters of Fact, and moral Evidence, to adopt his Notions. Though I must needs own I admit an allegorical Resurrection that proves the real: to wit, a Refurrection of Christ's Disciples from Weakness to Resolution, from Fear to Courage, from Despair to Hope: of which, for ought I can see, no rational Account can be given, but the fenfible Evidence that our Lord was truly, really, and literally

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risen from the dead: But as it cannot be DIAL. denied that his Disciples, who were Eye- VI. Witnesses of his Miracles and Resurrection, had stronger Evidence than we can have of those Points: So it cannot be denied, that fuch Evidence was then more necessary, to induce Men to embrace a new Institution, contrary to the whole System of their Education, their Prejudices, their Passions, their Interests, and every Humane Motive. Though to me it feems, the moral Evidence and probable Arguments within our Reach, are abundantly fufficient to make prudent thinking Men adhere to the Faith, handed down to us from our Ancestors, established by the Laws of our Country, requiring Submission in Points above our Knowledge, and for the rest recommending Doctrines the most agreeable to our Interest and our Reason. And, however strong the Light might have been at the Fountain-Head, yet its long Continuance and Propagation, by fuch unpromising Instruments throughout the World, have been very wonderful. We may now take a more comprehensive View of the Connexion, Order, and Progress of the divine Dispensations, and by a Retrospect on a long Series of past Ages, perceive a Unity of Design running throughout the Whole, a gradDIAL.a gradual disclosing and fulfilling the Purposes of Providence, a regular Progress from Types to Antitypes, from Things Carnal, to Things Spiritual, from Earth to Heaven. We may behold Christ crucified, that Stumbling-block to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Greeks, putting a final Period to the Temple Worship of the one, and the Idolatry of the other, and that Stone, which was cut out of the Mountain without Hands, and brake in Pieces all other Kingdoms, become it self a great Mountain.

> XXXII. If a due Reflexion on these Things be not sufficient to beget a Reverence for the Christian Faith in the Minds of Men, I should rather impute it to any other Cause, than a wise and cautious Incredulity: When I fee their Eafiness of Faith in the common Concerns of Life, where there is no Prejudice or Appetite to bias or disturb their natural Judgment: When I fee those very Men that in Religion will not stir a Step without Evidence, and at every Turn expect Demonstration, trust their Health to a Physician, and their Lives to a Sailor with an implicit Faith, I cannot think they deserve the Honour of being thought more incredulous than other Men: or that they are more

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more accustomed to know, and for this DIAL. Reason less inclined to believe. On the contrary, one is tempted to suspect, that Ignorance hath a greater Share than Science in our modern Infidelity: and that it proceeds more from a wrong Head, or an irregular Will, than from deep Refearches. LYS. We do not, it must be owned, think that Learning or deep Refearches are necessary to pass a right Judgment upon Things. I fometimes suspect that Learning is apt to produce and justify Whims, and fincerely believe we should do better without it. Our Sect are divided on this Point, but much the greater Part think with me. I have heard more than once very observing Men remark, that Learning was the true Humane Means which preserved Religion in the World: and that, if we had it in our Power to prefer Blockheads in the Church, all would foon be right. CRI. Men must be strangely in Love with their Opinions, to put out their Eyes rather than part with them. But it has been often remarked, by observing Men that there are no greater Bigots than Infidels. What! a Free-thinker and a Bigot, impossible! CRI. Not so impossible neither, that an Infidel should be bigoted to his Infidelity. Methinks I see a Bigot, whereever

DIAL ever I fee a Man over-bearing and positive without knowing why, laying the greatest Stress on Points of smallest Moment, hafty to judge of the Conscience, Thoughts, and inward Views of other Men, impatient of reasoning against his own Opinions, and choosing them with Inclination rather than Judgment, an Enemy to Learning, and attached to mean Authorities. How far our modern Infidels agree with this Description, I leave to be confidered by those who really consider and think for themselves. LYS. We are no Bigots, we are Men that discover Difficulties in Religion, that tie Knots and raise Scruples, which disturb the Repose and interrupt the golden Dreams of Bigots, who therefore cannot endure us. CRI. They who cast about for Difficulties, will be fure to find or make them upon every Subject: But he that would, upon the Foot of Reason, erect himself into a Judge, in order to make a wife Judgment on a Subject of that Nature, will not only confider the doubtful and difficult Parts of it, but take a comprehensive View of the whole, confider it in all its Parts and Relations, trace it to its Original, examine its Principles, Effects, and Tendencies, its Proofs internal and external: he will distinguish between

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ish een between the clear Points and the obscure, DIAL. the certain and the uncertain, the effential and the circumstantial, between what is genuine and what foreign. He will confider the different Sorts of Proof, that belong to different Things: where Evidence is to be expected: where Probability may fuffice: and where it is reasonable to suppose there should be Doubts and Scruples. He will proportion his Pains and Exactness to the Importance of the Inquiry, and check that Disposition of his Mind to conclude all those Notions, groundless Prejudices, with which it was imbued before it knew the Reason of them. will filence his Passions, and listen to Truth. He will endeavour to untie Knots as well as to tie them, and dwell rather on the light Parts of Things than the ob-He will balance the Force of his Understanding with the Difficulty of the Subject, and to render his Judgment impartial, hear Evidence on all Sides, and fo far as he is led by Authority, choose to follow that of the honestest and wifest Now it is my fincere Opinion, the Christian Religion may well stand the Test of such an Inquiry. LYS. But such an Inquiry would cost too much Pains and Time. We have thought of another Method, the bringing Religion to the Test of

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DIAL. Wit and Humour: This we find a much shorter, easier, and more effectual Way. And, as all Enemies are at Liberty to choose their Weapons, we make choice of those we are most expert at: And we are the better pleased with this Choice. having observed that of all Things a solid Divine hates a Jest. EUPH. To consider the whole of the Subject, to read and think on all Sides, to object plainly, and answer directly, upon the Foot of dry Reason and Argument, would be a very tedious and troublesome Affair. Besides it is attacking Pedants at their own Wea-How much more delicate and artful is it, to give a Hint, to cover one's felf with an Ænigma, to drop a double Entendre, to keep it in one's Power to recover, and flip afide, and leave his Antagonist beating the Air? LYS. This hath been practifed with great Success, and I believe it the Top Method to gain Proselytes, and confound Pedants. I have feen feveral Things written in this Way, which, I suppose, were copied from the Behaviour of a fly Sort of Scorners one may fometimes meet with. Suppose a conceited Man that would pass for witty, tipping the Wink upon one, thrusting out his Tongue at another; one while waggishly smiling, another with a grave Mouth

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Mouth and ludicrous Eyes; often affect-DIAL. ing the Countenance of one who fmother- VI. ed a Jest, and sometimes bursting out in a Horse-laugh: What a Figure would this be, I will not fay in the Senate or Council, but in a private Visit among well-bred Men? And yet this is the Figure that certain great Authors, who in this Age would pass for Models, and do pass for Models, make in their polite and elaborate Writings on the most weighty Points. ALC. I who profess my felf an Admirer, an Adorer of Reason, am obliged to own, that in some Cases the Sharpness of Ridicule can do no more than the Strength of Argument. But if we exert our felves in the Use of Mirth and Humour, it is not for want of other Weapons. It shall never be faid that a Free-thinker was afraid of Reasoning. No, Crito, we have Reasons in store, the best are yet to come: and if we can find an Hour for another Conference before we fet out to morrow Morning, I'll undertake you shall be plied with Reafons, as clear, and home, and close to the Point as you could wish.

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THE MINUTE

DIAL. VII.



The SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

I. Christian Faith impossible. II. Words stand for Ideas. III. No Knowledge or Faith without Ideas. IV. Grace, no Idea of it. V. Abstract Ideas what and how made. VI. Abstract general Ideas impossible. VII. In what Sense there may be general Ideas. VIII. Suggesting Ideas not the only Use of Words. IX. Force as difficult to form an Idea of as Grace. X. Notwithstanding which, useful Propositions may be formed concerning it. XI. Belief of the Trinity and other Mysteries not absurd. XII. Mistakes about Faith an Occasion of profane Raillery. XIII. Faith, its true Nature and Effects. XIV. Illustrated by Science. XV. By Arithmetic in particular. XVI. Sciences conversant about Signs. XVII. The true End of Speech, Reason, Science, and Faith. XVIII. Metaphyfical Objections as strong against Humane Sciences as Articles of Faith. XIX. No Religion, because no Humane Liberty. XX. Farther Proof against Humane Liberty. XXI. Fatalism a Consequence of erroneous Suppofitions.

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XXII. Man an accountable A-DIAL. gent. XXIII. Inconfistency, Singularity, VII. and Credulity of Minute Philosophers. XXIV. Untrodden Paths and new Light of the Minute Philosophers. XXV. Sophistry of the Minute Philosophers. XXVI: Minute Philosophers ambiguous, anigmatical, unfathomable. XXVII. Scepticism of the Minute Philosophers. XXVIII. How a Sceptic ought to behave. XXIX. Minute Philosophers, why difficult to convince. XXX. Thinking, not the epidemical Evil of these Times. XXXI. Infidelity, not an Effect of Reason or Thought, its true Motives assigned. XXXII. Variety of Opinions about Religion, Effects thereof. XXXIII. Method for proceeding with Minute Philosophers. XXXIV. Want of Thought and want of Education Defects of the present Age.



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I. Philosophers having refolved to fet out for London nextMorning, weaffembled at break of Day in the Library. Alciphron began with a Decla-

ration of his Sincerity, affuring us he had very maturely and with a most unbiassed Mind confidered all that had been faid the Day before. He added that, upon the whole, he could not deny feveral probable Reasons VOL. II. were

DIAL. were produced for embracing the Christian

Faith. But, faid he, those Reasons being only probable can never prevail against absolute Certainty and Demonstration. therefore I can demonstrate your Religion to be a thing altogether abfurd and inconfistent, your probable Arguments in its Defence do from that Moment lose their Force, and with it all Right to be answered The concurring Testimoor confidered. ny of fincere and able Witnesses hath without question great Weight in Humane Af-I will even grant that things odd and unaccountable to Humane Judgment or Experience, may fometimes claim our Affent on that fole Motive. And I will also grant it possible, for a Tradition to be convey'd with moral Evidence through many Centuries. But at the same time you will grant to me, that a thing demonstrably and palpably false is not to be admirted on any Testimony whatever, which at best can never amount to Demonstration. To be plain, no Testimony can make Nonsense Sense: no moral Evidence can make Contradictions confistent. then, that as the Strength of our Caule doth not depend upon, so neither is it to be decided by any critical Points of History, Chronology, or Languages. Youard not to wonder, if the same fort of Trad tion

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tion and moral Proof, which governs our DIAL. Affent with respect to Facts in civil or na- VII. tural History is not admitted as a sufficient Voucher for metaphyfical Absurdities and absolute Impossibilities. Things obscure and unaccountable in Humane Affairs, or the Operations of Nature, may yet be possible, and, if well attested, may be affented unto: but religious Affent or Faith can be evidently shewn in its own nature to be impracticable, impossible, and absurd. This is the primary Motive to Infidelity. This is our Citadel and Fortress, which may; indeed, be graced with Outwarks of various Erudition, but, if those are demolish'd, remains in it self and of its own proper Strength impregnable. EUPH. This, it must be owned, reduceth our Inquiry within a narrowCompass: do but make out this, and I shall have nothing more to fay. ALC. Know then, that the shallow Mind of the Vulgar, as it dwells only on the outward Surface of things, and confiders them in the gross, may be easily imposed on. a blind Reverence for religious Faith and Mystery. But when an acute Philosopher comes to diffect and analyse these Points, the Imposture plainly appears: and as he has no Blindness, so he has no Reverence for empty Notions, or, to speak more K 2 properly,

VII. mean nothing, and are of no use to Mankind.

> II. Words are Signs: they do or should stand for Ideas; which so far as they suggest they are fignificant. But Words that fuggest no Ideas are infignificant. He who annexeth a clear Idea to every Word he makes use of speaks Sense: but where such Ideas are wanting, the Speaker utters Nonfense. In order therefore to know whether any Man's Speech be fenfeless and infignificant, we have nothing to do but lay afide the Words and confider the Ideas fuggested Men, not being able immediately to communicate their Ideas one to another, are obliged to make use of sensible Signs or Words; the use of which is to raise those Ideas in the Hearer, which are in the Mind of the Speaker: and if they fail of this End they serve to no Purpose. He who really thinks hath a Train of Ideas succeeding each other and connected in his Mind: and when he expresfeth himself by Discourse, each Word suggests a distinct Idea to the Hearer or Reader; who by that means hath the fame Train of Ideas in his, which was in the Mind of the Speaker or Writer. as this Effect is produced, fo far the Difcourle

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course is intelligible, hath Sense and Mean-DIAL. ing. Hence it follows, that whoever can VII. be supposed to understand what he reads or hears, must have a Train of Ideas raised in his Mind, correspondent to the Train of Words read or heard. plain Truths, to which Men readily affent in Theory, are but little attended to in Practice, and therefore deserve to be enlarged on and inculcated however obvious and undeniable. Mankind are generally averse from Thinking though apt enough to entertain Discourse either in themselves or others: the Effect whereof is, that their Minds are rather stored with Names than Ideas, the Husk of Science rather than the Thing. yet these Words without Meaning do often make Distinctions of Parties, the Subject Matter of their Disputes, and the This is the most Object of their Zeal. general Cause of Error, which doth not influence ordinary Minds alone, but even those who pass for acute and learned Philosophers are often employ'd about Names instead of Things or Ideas, nd are supposed to know when they fame nly pronounce hard Words without a in the Meaning. As far

> III. Though K 3

III. Though it is evident that, as VII. Knowledge is the Perception of the Connexion or Disagreement between Ideas, he who doth not distinctly perceive the Ideas marked by the Terms, so as to form a mental Proposition answering to the Verbal, cannot possibly have Knowledge: No more can he be faid to have Opinion or Faith which imply a weaker Affent, but still it must be to a Proposition, the Terms of which are understood as clearly, though the Agreement or Disagreement of the Ideas may not be so evident, as in the Case of Knowledge. I say, all Degrees of Affent whether founded on Reason or Authority, more or less cogent, are internal Acts of the Mind which alike terminate in Ideas as their proper Object: without which there can be really no fuch thing as Knowledge, Faith, or Opinion. We may perhaps raise a Dust and Dispute about Tenets purely verbal: but what is this at bottom more than meer Trifling? All which will be eafily admitted with respect to Humane Learning and Science; wherein it is an allowed Method to expose any Doctrine or Tenet by stripping them of the Words, and examining what Ideas are underneath, or whether any Ideas at all? This is often found the shortest way

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to end Disputes, which might otherwise DIAL. grow and multiply without end, the Liti- VII. gants neither understanding one another nor themselves. It were needless to illustrate what shines by its own Light, and is admitted by all thinking Men. Endeavour shall be only to apply it in the present Case. I suppose I need not be at any pains to prove, that the same Rules of Reason and good Sense which obtain in all other Subjects ought to take place in Religion. As for those who consider Faith and Reason as two distinct Provinces, and would have us think good Sense has nothing to do where it is most concerned, I am resolved never to argue with such Men, but leave them in quiet possession of their Prejudices. And now, for the particular Application of what I have faid, I shall not fingle out any nice disputed Points of School Divinity, or those that relate to the Nature and Effence of God, which being allowed infinite you might pretend to screen them, under the general Notion of Difficulties attending the Nature of Infinity.

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IV. Grace is the main Point in the Christian Dispensation, nothing is oftner mentioned or more considered throughout the New Testament; wherein it is repre-

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DIAL. sented as somewhat of a very particular VII. Kind, distinct from any thing revealed to the Jews, or known by the Light of Nature. This same Grace is spoken of as the Gift of God, as coming by Jesus Christ, as reigning, as abounding, as operating. Men are faid to speak through Grace, to believe through Grace. Mention is made of the Glory of Grace, the Riches of Grace, the Stewards of Grace. Christians are said to be Heirs of Grace, to receive Grace, grow in Grace, be strong in Grace, to stand in Grace, and to fall from Grace. And laftly, Grace is faid to justify and to fave them. Hence Christianity is styled the Covenant or Dispensation of Grace. And it is well known that no Point hath created more Controversy in the Church than this Doctrine of Grace. What Disputes about its Nature, Extent, and Effects, about universal, efficacious, fufficient, preventing, irrefistible Grace, have employ'd the Pens of Protestant as well as Popish Divines, of Jansenists and Molinists, of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians, as I have not the least Curiofity to know, fo I need not fay. It fufficeth to observe, that there have been and are still subfisting great Contests upon these Points. Only one thing I should defire to be informed of, to wit, What is the clear and

and Grac bare into 1 ries. vided Term neithe nor th indeed and pr botton farthe taken ty, or when Princip the M natura self alt frame fore I c cerning Faith a Truth, poffibili phical 1

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and distinct Idea marked by the Word DIAL. Grace? I prefume a Man may know the VII. bare meaning of a Term, without going into the Depth of all those learned Inquiries. This furely is an easy Matter, provided there is an Idea annexed to fuch And if there is not, it can be neither the Subject of a rational Dispute, nor the Object of real Faith. Men may indeed impose upon themselves or others, and pretend to argue and believe, when at bottom there is no Argument or Belief, farther than meer verbal Trifling. Grace taken in the vulgar Sense, either for Beauty, or Favour, I can eafily understand. But when it denotes an active, vital, ruling Principle, influencing and operating on the Mind of Man, distinct from every natural Power or Motive, I profess my felf altogether unable to understand it, or frame any distinct Idea of it: and therefore I cannot affent to any Proposition concerning it, nor confequently have any Faith about it: and it is a felf-evident Truth, That God obligeth no Man to Impossibilities. At the Request of a Philosophical Friend, I did cast an Eye on the Writings he shew'd me of some Divines, and talked with others on this Subject, but after all I had read or heard could make nothing of it, having always found whenever

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DIAL.ever I laid afide the Word Grace, and looked into my own Mind, a perfect Vacuity or Privation of all Ideas. And, as I am apt to think Mens Minds and Faculties are made much alike, I suspect that other Men, if they examined what they call Grace with the same Exactness and Indifference, would agree with me that there was nothing in it but an empty This is not the only Instance, where a Word often heard and pronounced is believed intelligible, for no other Reason but because it is familiar. Of the same Kind are many other Points reputed neceffary Articles of Faith. That which in the present Case imposeth upon Mankind I take to be partly this. Men speak of this holy Principle as of fomething that acts, moves, and determines, taking their Ideas from corporeal things, from Motion and the Force or Momentum of Bodies, which being of an obvious and fensible Nature they substitute in place of a thing spiritual and incomprehensible, which isa manifest Delusion. For though the Idea of corporeal Force be ever fo clear and intelligible, it will not therefore follow that the Idea of Grace, a thing perfectly incorporeal, must be so too. And though we may reason distinctly, perceive, assent, and form Opinions about the one, it will

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by no means follow that we can do so of DIAL. the other. Thus it comes to pass, that a VII. clear sensible Idea of what is real produceth, or rather is made a Pretence for, an imaginary spiritual Faith that terminates in no Object; a thing impossible! For there can be no Assent where there are no Ideas: and where there is no Assent there can be no Faith: And what cannot be, that no Man is obliged to. This is as clear as any thing in Euclid.

V. The fame Method of Reasoning may be applied by any Man of Sense to confute all other the most essential Articles of the Christian Faith. You are not therefore to wonder that a Man who proceeds on fuch folid Grounds, fuch clear and evident Principles, should be deaf to all you can fay from moral Evidence, or probable Arguments, which are nothing in the Balance against Demonstration. EUPH. The more Light and Force there is in this Discourse, the more you are to blame for not having produced it fooner. For my part I should never have faid one Word against Evidence. But let me see whether I understand you rightly. You say, every Word in an intelligible Discourse must stand for an Idea; which Ideas as far as they are clearly and distinctly apprehended, DIAL.ed, so far the Discourse hath Meaning, without which it is useless and insignifi-ALC. I do. EUPH. For Instance. cant. when I hear the Words Man, Triangle, Colour, pronounced; they must excite in my Mind distinct Ideas of those things whereof they are Signs, otherwise I cannot be faid to understand them. Right. EUPH. And this is the only true Use of Language. ALC. That is what I affirm. EUPH. But every time the Word Man occurs in Reading or Conversation, I am not conscious that the particular distinct Idea of a Man is excited in my For Instance, when I read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians these Words: If a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth Methinks I comprehend the bimself. Force and Meaning of this Proposition, although I do not frame to my felf the particular distinct Idea of a Man. It is very true, you do not form in your Mind the particular Idea of Peter, James, or John, of a fair or a black, a tall or a low, a fat or a lean, a straight or a crooked, a wife or a foolish, a sleeping or waking Man, but the abstract general Idea of Man, prescinding from, and exclusive of all particular Shape, Size, Complexion, Passions, Faculties, and every individual Cir-

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Circumstance. To explain this Matter DIAL. more fully, you are to understand there is VII. in the Humane Mind, a Faculty of contemplating the general Nature of things, separate from all those Particularities which diftinguish the Individuals one from For Example, in Peter, James, and John, you may observe in each a certain Collection of Stature, Figure, Colour, and other peculiar Properties by which they are known afunder, diftinguished from all other Men, and, if I may fo fay, individuated. Now leaving out of the Idea of a Man, that which is peculiar to the Individual, and retaining only that which is common to all Men, you form an abstract universal Idea of Man or Humane Nature, which includes no particular Stature, Shape, Colour, or other Quality whether of Mind or Body. After the fame manner you may observe particular Triangles to differ one from another, as their Sides are equal or unequal, and their Angles greater or leffer: whence they are denominated æquilateral, æquicrural, or scalenum, obtusangular, acutangular, or rectangular. But the Mind, excluding out of its Idea all these peculiar Properties and Distinctions, frameth the general abstract Idea of a Triangle; which is neither æquilateral, æquicrural, nor scalenum,

DIAL. lenum, neither obtusangular, acutangular, nor rectangular, but all and none of these at once *. The same may be said of the general abstract Idea of Colour, which is fomething diffinct from and exclusive of Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, and every other particular Colour, including only that general Essence in which they all agree. And what has been faid of these three general Names. and the abstract general Ideas they stand for may be applied to all others. For you must know, that, particular Things or Ideas being infinite, if each were marked or fignified by a distinct proper Name, Words must have been innumerable, and Language an endless impossible thing. Hence it comes to pass, that appellative or general Names stand, immediately and properly, not for particular but for abstract general Ideas, which they never fail to excite in the Mind, as oft as they are used to any fignificant Purpose. And without this, there could be no Communication or Enlargement of Knowledge, no fuch thing as universal Science or Theorems of any kind. Now for understanding any Propofition or Discourse, it is sufficient that distinct Ideas are thereby raised in your Mind, correspondent to those in the

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^{*} See Locke on Humane Understanding, b. 4. c. 7.

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Speaker's, whether the Ideas fo raised are DIAL. particular or only abstract and general VII. Forasmuch, nevertheless, as these are not so obvious and familiar to vulgar Minds, it happens that fome Men may think they have no Idea at all, when they have not a particular Idea: but the Truth is, you had the abstract general Idea of Man, in the Instance affigned, wherein you thought you had none. After the fame manner, when it is faid, that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones; or, that Colour is the Object of Sight; it is evident the Words do not stand for this or that Triangle or Colour, but for abstract general Ideas, excluding every thing peculiar to the Individuals, and including only the universal Nature common to the whole kind of Triangles or of Colours.

VI. EUPH. Tell me, Alciphron, are those abstract general Ideas clear and distinct? ALC. They are above all others clear and distinct, being the only proper Object of Science, which is altogether conversant about Universals. EUPH. And do you not think it very possible for any Man to know, whether he has this or that clear and distinct Idea or no? ALC. Doubtless. To know this he needs only

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DIAL, examine his own Thoughts and look into his own Mind. EUPH. But upon looking into my own Mind, I do not find that I have or can have these general abstract Ideas of a Man or a Triangle abovementioned, or of Colour prescinded from all particular Colours*. Though I shut mine Eyes, and use mine utmost Efforts, and reflect on all that paffeth in my own Mind I find it utterly impossible to form fuch Ideas. ALC. To reflect with due Attention and turn the Mind inward upon it felf, is a difficult Task, and not every one's Talent. EUPH. Not to infift on what you allowed, that every one might eafily know for himself whether he has this or that Idea or no: I am tempted to think no body else can form those Ideas any more than I can. Pray, Alciphron, which are those things you would call absolutely impossible? ALC. Such as include a Contradiction. EUPH. Can you frame an Idea of what includes a Contradiction? ALC. I cannot. EUPH. Consequently whatever is absolutely impossible you cannot form an Idea of. ALC. This I EUPH. But can a Colour or Triangle, such as you describe their

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^{*} See the Introduction to a Treatise concerning the Principles of Humane Knowledge, Printed in the Year MDCCX. where the Absurdity of abstract Ideas is fully considered.

abstract general Ideas, really exist? ALC. DIAL. It is absolutely impossible such things VII. should exist in Nature. EUPH. Should it not follow then that they cannot exist in your Mind, or in other Words that you cannot conceive or frame an Idea of them? ALC. You feem, Euphranor, not to distinguish between pure Intellect and Imagination. Abstract general Ideas I take to be the Object of pure Intellect, which may conceive them although they cannot perhaps be imagined. EUPH. I do not perceive that I can by any Faculty, whether of Intellect or Imagination, conceive or frame an Idea of that which is impossible and includes a Contradiction. And I am very much at a loss to account for your admitting that in common Instances, which you would make an Argument against Divine Faith and Mysteries.

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VII. ALC. There must be some Mistake in this. How is it possible there should be general Knowledge without general Propositions, or these without general Names, which cannot be without general Ideas by standing for which they become general? EUPH. But may not Words become general, by being made to stand indiscriminately for all particular Vol. II.

VII. belong to the same Kind, without the Intervention of any abstract general Idea?

ALC. Is there then no fuch thing as a general Idea? EUPH. May we not admit general Ideas, though we should not admit them to be made by Abstraction, or though we should not allow of general abstract Ideas? To me it seems, a particular Idea may become general by being used to stand for or represent other Ideas; and that general Knowledge is conversant about Signs or general Ideas made fuch by their Signification; and which are confidered rather in their relative Capacity, and as fubstituted for others, than in their own Nature, or for their own fake. A Black Line, for instance, an Inch long, though in it felf particular, may yet become Universal, being used as a Sign to stand for any Line whatsoever. ALC. It is your Opinion then, that Words become general by representing an indefinite Number of particular Ideas. EUPH. It feems fo to me. ALC. Whenever therefore! hear a general Name, it must be supposed to excite some one or other particular Idea of that Species in my Mind. EUPH. 1 cannot fay fo neither. Pray, Alciphron, doth it feem to you necessary, that as often as the Word Man occurs in Reading the Ideas
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or Discourse, you must form in your Mind DIAL. the Idea of a particular Man? ALC. I own VII. it doth not: and not finding particular Ideas always suggested by the Words, I was led to think I had abstract general Ideas suggested by them. And this is the Opinion of all Thinking Men who are agreed, the only Use of Words is to suggest Ideas. And indeed what other Use can we affign them?

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VIII. EUPH. Be the Use of Words or Names what it will, I can never think it is to do things impossible. Let us then inquire what it is? and see if we can make Sense of our daily Practice. Words, it is agreed, are Signs: it may not therefore be amiss to examine the Use of other Signs, in order to know that of Words. Counters, for instance, at a Card-Table are used, not for their own fake, but only as Signs substituted for Money, as Words are for Ideas. Say now, Alciphron, is it necessary every time these Counters are used throughout the whole Progress of a Game, to frame an Idea of the distinct Sum or Value that each represents? ALC. By no means: it is fufficient the Players at first agree on their respective Values, and at last substitute those Values in their stead. EUPH. And in casting L 2

DIAL.casting up a Sum, where the Figures stand VII. for Pounds, Shillings, and Pence, do you think it necessary, throughout the whole Progress of the Operation, in each Step to form Ideas of Pounds, Shillings, and Pence? ALC. I do not, it will fuffice if in the Conclusion those Figures direct our Actions with respect to Things. EUPH. From hence it feems to follow that Words may not be infignificant, although they should not, every time they are used, excite the Ideas they fignify in our Minds, it being sufficient, that we have it in our Power to substitute Things or Ideas for their Signs when there is Occasion. feems also to follow, that there may be another Use of Words, besides that of marking and fuggefting diffinct Ideas, to wit, the influencing our Conduct and Actions; which may be done either by forming Rules for us to act by, or by raising certain Passions, Dispositions, and Emotions in our Minds. A Discourse, therefore, that directs how to act or excites to the Doing or Forbearance of an Action may, it feems, be useful and fignificant, although the Words whereof it is composed should not bring each a distinct Idea into our Minds. ALC. It feems fo. EUPH. Pray tell me, Alcipbron, is not an Idea altogether inactive? ALC. It is. EUPH.

EU. Min an Id that Princ **ftrict** And fince Term mean Idea, appre ALC. EUP] that \ they d trary feems abstrac low tl **EUPI** a certai that ca ed afu or abstr stance : lour fro

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EUPH. An Agent therefore, an active DIAL. Mind, or Spirit cannot be an Idea or like an Idea. Whence it should seem to follow, that those Words, which denote an active Principle, Soul, or Spirit, do not, in a strict and proper Sense, stand for Ideas: And yet they are not infignificant neither: fince I understand what is fignified by the Term I, or my felf, or know what it means although it be no Idea, nor like an Idea, but that which thinks and wills and apprehends Ideas and operates about them. ALC. What would you infer from this? EUPH. What hath been inferred already, that Words may be fignificant although they do not stand for Ideas *. The contrary whereof having been presumed feems to have produced the Doctrine of abstract Ideas. ALC. Will you not allow then that the Mind can abstract? EUPH. I do not deny it may abstract in a certain Sense; inasmuch as those Things that can really exist, or be really perceived afunder, may be conceived afunder, or abstracted one from the other; for instance a Man's Head from his Body, Colour from Motion, Figure from Weight. But it will not thence follow, that the Mind can frame abstract general Ideas,

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^{*} See the Principles of Humane Knowledge. Sect. 135. and the Introduction. Sect. 20.

DIAL. which appear to be impossible. ALC. VII. And yet it is a current Opinion, that every substantive Name marks out and exhibits to the Mind one distinct Idea separate from all others. EUPH. Pray, Alciphron, is not the Word Number such fubstantive Name? ALC. It is. EUPH. Do but try now whether you can frame an Idea of Number in abstract exclusive of all Signs, Words, and Things numbered. I profess, for my own part, I cannot. ALC. Can it be fo harda Matter to form a fimple Idea of Number, the Object of a most evident demonstrable Science? Hold, let me see, if I can't abstract the Idea of Number, from the numeral Names and Characters, and all particular numerable Things. Upon which Alciphron paused a While and then faid: To confess the Truth I do not find that I can. EUPH. But though, it feems, neither you nor I can form distinct simple Ideas of Number, we can nevertheless make a very proper and significant Use of numeral Names. direct us in the Disposition and Management of our Affairs, and are of fuch neceffary Use, that we should not know how to do without them. And yet, if other Mens Faculties may be judged of by mine, to attain a precise simple abstract Idea

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Idea of Number, is as difficult as to com-DIAL. prehend any Mystery in Religion. VII.

IX. But to come to your own Instance, let us examine what Idea we can frame of Force abstracted from Body, Motion, and outward sensible Effects. For my self, I do not find that I have or can have any fuch Idea. ALC. Surely every one knows what is meant by Force. EUPH. And vet I question whether every one can form a distinct Idea of Force. Let me intreat you, Alciphron, be not amused by Terms, lay afide the Word Force, and exclude every other Thing from your Thoughts, and then see what precise Idea you have of Force. ALC. Force is that in Bodies which produceth Motion and other fenfible Effects. EUPH. It is then fomething distinct from those Effects. ALC. It is. EUPH. Be pleased now to exclude the Confideration of its Subject and Effects, and contemplate Force it felf in its own precise Idea. ALC. I profess I find it no fuch eafy Matter. EUPH. Take your own Advice, and shut your Eyes to affift your Meditation. Upon this Alciphron having closed his Eyes, and mused a few Minutes, declared he could make nothing of it. And that, replied Euphranor, which it feems neither you nor I L4

DIAL.can frame an Idea of, by your own Remark of Mens Minds and Faculties being made much alike, we may suppose others have no more an Idea of than we. ALC. We may. EUPH. But, notwithstanding all this, it is certain there are many Speculations, Reasonings, and Disputes, refined Subtilties and nice Distinctions about this same Force. And to explain its Nature, and distinguish the several Notions or Kinds of it, the Terms, Gravity, Reaction, vis inertiæ, vis infita, vis impressa, vis mortua, vis viva, impetus, momentum, solicitatio, conatus, and divers other fuch like Expressions have been used by learned Men: and no small Controversies have arisen about the Notions or Definitions of these Terms. It has puzzled Men to know whether Force is spiritual or corporeal, whether it remains after Action, how it is transferred from one Body to another. Strange Paradoxes have been framed about its Nature, Properties, and Proportions: For instance, that contrary Forces may at once fublist in the same quiescent Body: That the Force of Percussion in a small Particle is infinite: For which, and other Curiofities of the same fort, you may consult Borellus de vi percussionis, the Lezioni Academiche of Toricelli, the Exercitations of

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of Hermanus, and other Writers. It is DIAL. well known to the learned World, what VII. a Controversy hath been carried on between Mathematicians, particularly Monfieur Leibnitz and Monsieur Papin in the Leipfic Acta Eruditorum, about the Proportion of Forces: whether they be each to other in a Proportion compounded of the fimple Proportions of the Bodies and the Celerities, or in one compounded of the fimple Proportion of the Bodies and the duplicate Proportion of the Celerities? A Point, it feems, not yet agreed: as indeed the Reality of the Thing it felf is made a Question. Leibnitz distinguisheth between the nifus elementaris and the impetus, which is formed by a Repetition of the nifus elementaris, and seems to think they do not exist in Nature, but are made only by an Abstraction of the Mind. The same Author treating of original, active Force, to illustrate his Subject hath Recourse to the substantial Forms and Entelecheia of Aristotle. And the ingenious Toricelli faith of Force and Impetus, that they are fubtile Abstracts and spiritual Quintessences: and concerning the momentum and the Velocity of heavy Bodies falling, he faith they are un certo che, and un non so che, that is in plain English he knows not what to make of them. Upon the

VII. nounce, that excluding Body, Time,
Space, Motion and all its sensible Measures and Effects, we shall find it as difficult to form an Idea of Force as of Grace?

ALC. I do not know what to think of it.

X. EUPH. And yet, I presume, you allow there are very evident Propositions or Theorems relating to Force, which contain useful Truths: for instance, that a Body with conjunct Forces describes the Diagonal of a Parallelogram, in the fame time that it would the Sides with feparate, Is not this a Principle of very extensive Use? Doth not the Doctrine of the Composition and Resolution of Forces depend upon it, and in Consequence thereof, numberless Rules and Theorems directing Men how to act, and explaining Phænomena throughout the Mechanics and mathematical Philosophy? And if, by considering this Doctrine of Force, Men arrive at the Knowledge of many Inventions in Mechanics, and are taught to frame Engines, by means of which Things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed; and if the same Doctrine, which is fo beneficial here below, serveth also as a Key to discover the Na-

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ture of the Celestial Motions; shall we DIAL. deny that it is of Use, either in Practice VII. or Speculation, because we have no diftinct Idea of Force? Or that which we admit with Regard to Force, upon what Pretence can we deny concerning Grace? If there are Queries, Disputes, Perplexities, Diversity of Notions and Opinions about the one, fo there are about the other also: if we can form no precise distinct Idea of the one, so neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore by a Parity of Reason to conclude, there may be divers true and useful Proportions concerning the one as well as the other? And that Grace may be an Object of our Faith, and influence our Life and Actions, as a Principle destructive of evil Habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct Idea of it, separate or abstracted from God the Author, from Man the Subject, and from Virtue and Piety its Effects?

XI. Shall we not admit the same Method of arguing, the same Rules of Logic, Reason, and good Sense to obtain in Things Spiritual and Things Corporeal, in Faith and Science? and shall we not use the same Candour, and make the same Allowances in examining the Revelations

of

DIAL. of God and the Inventions of Men? For ought I fee, that Philosopher cannot be free from Bias and Prejudice, or be faid to weigh Things in an equal Balance, who shall maintain the Doctrine of Force and reject that of Grace, who shall admit the abstract Idea of a Triangle, and at the fame Time ridicule the Holy Trinity. But, however partial or prejudiced other Minute Philosophers might be, you have laid it down for a Maxim, that the fame Logic, which obtains in other Matters, must be admitted in Religion. LYS. I think, Alciphron, it would be more prudent to abide by the Way of Wit and Humour, than thus to try Religion by the dry Test of Reason and Logic. ALC. Fear not: by all the Rules of right Reafon, it is absolutely impossible that any Mystery, and least of all the Trinity, should really be the Object of Man's Faith. EUPH. I do not wonder you thought so, as long as you maintained that no Man could affent to a Proposition without perceiving or framing in his Mind distinct Ideas marked by the Terms of it. But although Terms are Signs, yet having granted that those Signs may be fignificant, though they should not fuggest Ideas represented by them, provided they ferve to regulate and influence

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fluence our Wills, Passions, or Conduct, DIAL. you have confequently granted, that the VII. Mind of Man may affent to Propositions containing fuch Terms, when it is fo directed or affected by them, notwithstanding it should not perceive distinct Ideas marked by those Terms. Whence it seems to follow, that a Man may believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in Holy Scripture, That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are God, and that there is but one God? Although he doth not frame in his Mind. any abstract or distinct Ideas of Trinity. Substance, or Personality, provided, that this Doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper Impressions on his Mind, producing therein, Love, Hope, Gratitude, and Obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative Principle influencing his Life and Actions, agreeably to that Notion of faving Faith which is required in a Christian. This, I say whether right or wrong, seems to follow from your own Principles and Concessions. But for further Satisfaction, it may not be amiss to inquire, whether there be any Thing parallel to this Christian Faith in the Minute Philosophy. Suppose, a fine Gentleman or Lady of Fashion, who are too much employed to think

DIAL think for themselves, and are only Free. thinkers at fecond Hand, have the Advantage of being betimes initiated in the Principles of your Sect, by conversing with Men of Depth and Genius, who have often declared it to be their Opinion, the World is governed either by Fate or by Chance, it matters not which: will you deny it possible for such Persons to yield their Affent to either of these Propositions? ALC. I will not. EUPH. And may not fuch their Affent be properly called Faith? ALC. It may, EUPH. And yet it is possible, those Difciples of the Minute Philosophy may not dive so deep, as to be able to frame any abstract, or precise, or any determinate Idea whatfoever, either of Fate or of Chance. ALC. This too I grant. EUPH. So that according to you, this fame Gentleman or Lady may be faid to believe or have Faith, where they have not ALC. They may. EUPH. And may not this Faith or Persuasion produce real Effects, and shew it self in the Conduct and Tenor of their Lives, freeing them from the Fears of Superstition, and giving them a true Relish of the World, with a noble Indolence or Indifference about what comes after. ALC. It may. EUPH. And may not Christians, with equal

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equal Reason, be allowed to believe the DIAL. Divinity of our Saviour, or that in him VII. God and Man make one Person, and be verily persuaded thereof, so far as for fuch Faith or Belief to become a real Principle of Life and Conduct? inafmuch as by virtue of fuch Persuasion they submit to his Government, believe his Doctrine, and practife his Precepts, although they frame no abstract Idea of the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature; nor may be able to clear up the Notion of Person to the Contentment of a Minute Philosopher. To me it seems evident, that if none but those who had nicely examined, and could themselves explain, the Principle of Individuation in Man, or untie the Knots and answer the Objections, which may be raifed even about Humane Personal Identity, would require of us to explain the Divine Mysteries, we should not be often called upon for a clear and distinct Idea of Person in relation to the Trinity, nor would the Difficulties on that Head be often objected to ALC. Methinks, there is our Faith. no fuch Mystery in Personal Identity. EUPH. Pray in what do you take it to confift? ALC. In Consciousness. EUPH. Whatever is possible may be supposed. ALC. It may. EUPH. We will fupDIAL. suppose now (which is possible in the VII. Nature of Things, and reported to be Fact) that a Person, through some violent Accident or Distemper, should fall into fuch a total Oblivion, as to lofe all Consciousness of his past Life, and former I ask, is he not still the same Per. fon? ALC. He is the same Man, but not the fame Person. Indeed you ought not to suppose that a Person loseth its former Consciousness; for this is impossible, though a Man perhaps may; but then he becomes another Person. In the same Perfon, it must be owned, some old Ideas may be loft, and fome new ones got: but a total Change is inconfistent with Identity of Person. EUPH. Let us then suppose that a Person hath Ideas, and is conscious during a certain Space of Time, which we will divide into three equal Parts, whereof the later Terms are marked by the Letters, A, B, C. In the first part of Time, the Person gets a certain Number of Ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of Time, he retains one Half of his old Ideas, and loseth the other Half, in place of which he acquired as many new ones: So that in B his Ideas are half old and half new. And in the third Part, we suppose him to lose the Remainder of the Ideas acquired in the First,

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First, and to get new ones in their stead, DIAL. which are retained in C, together with VII. those acquired in the second Part of Time. Is this a possible fair Supposition? ALC. It is. EUPH. Upon these Premisses I am tempted to think, one may demonstrate, that Personal Identity doth not confist in Consciousness. ALC. As how? EUPH. You shall judge; but thus it feems to me. The Persons in A and B are the same, being conscious of common Ideas by Suppofition. The Person in B is (for the same Reason) one and the same with the Perfon in C. Therefore the Person in A, is the same with the Person in C, by that undoubted Axiom, Quæ conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter se. But the Person in Chath no Idea in common with the Per-Therefore Personal Identity fon in A. doth not confift in Consciousness. What do you think, Alciphron, is not this a plain Inference? ALC. I tell you what I think: You will never affift my Faith, by puzzling my Knowledge.

XII. EUPH. There is, if I mistake not, a Practical Faith, or Assent, which sheweth it self in the Will and Actions of a Man, although his Understanding may not be furnished with those abstract, precise, distinct Ideas, which, whatever, a Vol. II. M Phi-

DIAL. Philosopher may pretend, are acknow. VII. ledged to be above the Talents of common Men; among whom, nevertheless. may be found, even according to your own Concession, many Instances of such practical Faith, in other Matters which do not concern Religion. What should hinder therefore, but that Doctrines relating to Heavenly Mysteries, might be taught in this faving Sense to vulgar Minds, which you may well think incapable of all Teaching and Faith in the Sense you suppose, Which mistaken Sense, said Crito, hasgiven occasion to much profane and misapplied Raillery. But all this may very justly be retorted on the Minute Philosophers themselves, who confound Scholasticism with Christianity, and impute to other Men those Perplexities, Chimæras, and inconfistent Ideas, which are often the Workmanship of their own Brains, and proceed from their own wrong way of Thinking. Who doth not fee that fuch an ideal abstracted Faith is never thought of by the Bulk of Christians, Husbandmen, for instance, Artisans, or Servants? Or what Footsteps are there in the Holy Scripture to make us think, that the Wiredrawing of abstract Ideas was a Task injoined either Jews or Christians? Is there any thing in the Law or the Prophets, the

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Evangelists or Apostles, that looks like it? DIAL. Every one, whose Understanding is not per- VII. verted by Science falfly fo called, may fee the faving Faith of Christians is quite of another Kind, a vital operative Principle, productive of Charity and Obedience. ALC. What are we to think then of the Disputes and Decisions of the famous Council of Nice, and so many subsequent Councils? What was the Intention of those venerable Fathers the Homoousians and the Homoioufians? Why did they difturb themselves and the World with hard Words, and fubrile Controversies? CRI. Whatever their Intention was, it could not be to beget nice abstracted Ideas of Mysteries in the Minds of common Christians, this being evidently impossible: Nor doth it appear that the Bulk of Christian Men did in those Days think it any part of their Duty, to lay afide the Words, thut their Eyes, and frame those abstract Ideas; any more than Men now do of Force, Time, Number, or feveral other things, about which they nevertheless believe, know, argue, and dispute. To me it feems, that, whatever was the Source of those Controversies, and howfoever they were managed, wherein Humane Infirmity must be supposed to have had its Share, the main End was not, on M 2 either

DIAL. either side, to convey precise positive Ideas to the Minds of Men, by the use of those contested Terms, but rather a negative Sense, tending to exclude Polytheism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other *. ALC. But what shall we say of fo many learned and ingenious Divines, who from time to time have obliged the World with new Explications of Mysteries, who, having themselves professedly laboured to acquire accurate Ideas, would recommend their Discoveries and Speculations to others for Articles of Faith? CRI. To all fuch Innovators in Religion I would say with Jerome, " Why after " fo many Centuries do you pretend to " teach us what was untaught before? " Why explain what neither Peter nor " Paul thought necessary to be ex-" plained?+" And it must be owned, that the Explication of Mysteries in Divinity, allowing the Attempt as fruitless as the Pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone in Chymistry, or the Perpetual Motion in Mechanics, is no more than they, chargeable on the Profession it felf, but only on the wrongheaded Professors of it.

* Vid. Sozomen. 1. 2. c. 8.

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[†] Hieronym. ad Pammachium & Oceanum de erroribus Origenis.

XIII. It feems, that what hath been DIAL. now faid, may be applied to other My- VII. steries of our Religion. Original Sin, for instance, a Man may find it impossible to form an Idea of in abstract, or of the manner of its Transmission, and yet the Belief thereof may produce in his Mind a falutary Sense of his own Unworthiness, and the Goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good Habits, and from them good Actions, the genuine Effects of Faith: which confidered in its true Light, is a thing neither repugnant nor incomprehenfible, as some Men would perfuade us, but fuited even to vulgar Capacities, placed in the Will and Affections rather than in the Understanding, and producing holy Lives, rather than fubtile Theories. Faith, I fay, is not an indolent Perception, but an operative Perfuafion of Mind, which ever worketh fome fuitable Action, Disposition, or Emotion in those who have it: as it were easy to prove and illustrate by innumerable Instances taken from Humane Affairs. And, indeed, while the Christian Religion is confidered as an Institution fitted to ordinary Minds, rather than to the nicer Talents, whether improved or puzzled, of speculative Men; and our Notions about Faith are accordingly taken from the M 3 Com-

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DIAL. Commerce of the World, and Practice of VII. Mankind, rather than from the peculiar Systems of Refiners; it will, I think, be no difficult Matter to conceive and justify the Meaning and Use of our Belief of Mysteries, against the most confident Asfertions and Objections of the Minute Philosophers, who are easily to be caught in those very Snares, which they have spun and spread for others. And that Humour of Controversy, the Mother and Nurse of Herefies, would doubtless very much abate, if it was confidered that things are to be rated, not by the Colour, Shape, or Stamp, so truly as by the Weight. If the Moment of Opinions had been by some litigious Divines made the Measure of their Zeak, it might have spared much Trouble both to themselves and others. Certainly one that takes his Notions of Faith, Opinion, and Affent from Common Sense, and Common Use, and has maturely weighed the Nature of Signs and Language, will not be so apt to controvert the Wording of a Mystery, or to break the Peace of the Church, for the fake of retaining or rejecting a Term. But, to convince you, by a plain Instance, of the efficacious necessary Use of Faith without Ideas: we will suppose a Man of the World, a Minute Philosopher, prodigal prodigal and rapacious, one of large Ap-DIAL. petites and narrow Circumstances, who VII. shall have it in his Power at once to seife upon a great Fortune by one villanous Act, a fingle Breach of Trust, which he can commit with Impunity and Secrecy: Is it not natural to suppose him arguing in this manner? All Mankind in their Senses pursue their Interest. The Interests of this present Life are either of Mind, Body, or Fortune. If I commit this Fact my Mind will be easy (having nought to fear here or hereafter) my bodily Pleafures will be multiplied, and my Fortune enlarged. Suppose now, one of your refined Theorifts talks to him about the Harmony of Mind and Affections, inward Worth, Truth of Character, in one Word, the Beauty of Virtue; which is the only Interest he can propose, to turn the Scale against all other secular Interests and senfual Pleasures; would it not, think you, be a vain Attempt? On the other hand, possess him with a thorough Belief or Perfuafion, that he shall forfeit eternal Happiness, and incur eternal Misery: and this alone may fuffice to turn the Scale. I fay, in fuch a Juncture what can the most plaufible and refined Philosophy of your Sect offer, to diffuade fuch a Man from his Purpose, more than affuring him that M 4

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DIAL abstracted Delight of the Mind, the En. VII. joyments of an interior moral Sense, the To καλόν are what conflitute his true Interest? And what Effect can this have on a Mind callous to all those things, and at the same time strongly affected with a Sense of corporeal Pleasures, and the outward Interest, Ornaments, and Conveniencies of Life? Whereas that very Man, do but produce in him a fincere Belief of a future State, although it be a Mystery, although it be what Eye hath not feen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, he shall nevertheless, by virtue of such Belief, be withheld from executing his wicked Project: and that for Reasons which all Men can comprehend, though no body can the Object of them. I will allow the Points infifted on by your refined Moralists to be as lovely and excellent as you please to a reasonable, reflecting, philosophical Mind. But I will venture to fay, That, as the World goes, few, very few, would be influenced by them. We see, therefore, the necessary Use as well as the powerful Effects of Faith, even where we have not Ideas.

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XIV. ALC. It feems, Euphranor and DIAL. you would persuade me into an Opinion, that there is nothing fo fingularly abfurd as we are apt to think, in the Belief of Mysteries: and that a Man need not renounce his Reason to maintain his Reli-But if this were true, how comes it to pass, that, in proportion as Men abound in Knowledge, they dwindle in Faith? EUPH. O Alcipbron, I have learned from you, that there is nothing like going to the Bottom of things, and analyfing them into their first Principles. I shall therefore make an Essay of this Method, for clearing up the Nature of Faith: with what Success, I shall leave you to determine: for I dare not pronounce my felf on my own Judgment, whether it be ight or wrong: But thus it feems to me. The Objections made to Faith are by no means an Effect of Knowledge, but proceed rather from an Ignorance of what Knowledge is: which Ignorance may pofbly be found even in those who pass for Masters of this or that particular Branch f Knowledge. Science and Faith agree in his, that they both imply an Assent of the find: And, as the Nature of the First is nost clear and evident, it should be first onfidered in order to cast a Light on the ther. To trace things from their Original,

DIAL. nal, it feems that the Humane Mind, na. VII. turally furnished with the Ideas of things particular and concrete, and being defign'd, not for the bare Intuition of Ideas, but for Action or Operation about them, and pursuing her own Happiness therein, stands in need of certain general Rules or Theorems to direct her Operations in this Pursuit: the supplying which Want is the true, original, reasonable End of studying the Arts and Sciences. Now these Rules being general, it follows, that they are not to be obtained by the meer Confideration of the original Ideas, or particular Things, but by the means of Marks or Signs, which, being fo far forth univerfal, become the immediate Instruments and Materials of Science. It is not therefore by meer Contemplation of particular Things, and much less of their abstract general Ideas, that the Mind makes her Progress, but by an apposite Choice and skilful Management of Signs: For instance, Force and Number, taken in concrete with their Adjuncts, Subjects, and Signs, are what every one knows: and confidered in abstract, so as making precife Ideas of themselves, they are what no Body can comprehend. That their abstract Nature, therefore, is not the Foundation of Science, is plain: And that

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parely confidering their Ideas in concrete, DIAL. is not the Method to advance in the re-VII. spective Sciences, is what every one that reflects may see; nothing being more evident, than that one, who can neither write nor read, in common Use understands the Meaning of Numeral Words, as well as the best Philosopher or Mathematician.

XV. But here lies the Difference: the me who understands the Notation of Numbers, by means thereof is able to express briefly and distinctly all the Variety nd Degrees of Number, and to perform with Ease and Dispatch several Arithmeical Operations, by the help of general Rules. Of all which Operations as the We in Humane Life is very evident, so t is no less evident, that the performing hem depends on the Aptness of the Noation. If we suppose rude Mankind vithout the Use of Language, it may be refumed, they would be ignorant of Athmetic: But the Use of Names, by the epetition whereof in a certain Order they hight express endless Degrees of Numer, would be the first Step towards that cience. The next Step would be, to deife proper Marks of a permanent Naure, and visible to the Eye, the Kind and DIAL and Order whereof must be chose with VII. Judgment, and accommodated to the Names. Which Marking or Notation would, in proportion as it was apt and regular, facilitate the Invention and Application of general Rules, to affift the Mind in reasoning and judging, in extending, recording and communicating its Knowledge about Numbers: in which Theory and Operations, the Mind is immediately occupied about the Signs or Notes, by Mediation of which it is directed to act about Things, or Number in concrete (as the Logicians call it) without ever confidering the fimple, abstract, intellectual, general Idea of Number. I imagine one need not think much to be convinced, that the Science of Arithmetic, in its Rife, Operations, Rules, and Theorems, is altogether conversant about the artificial Use of Signs, Names, and Cha-These Names and Characters are racters. universal, inasmuch as they are Signs. The Names are referred to Things, the Characters to Names, and both to Opera-The Names being few, and proceeding by a certain Analogy, the Characters will be more useful, the simpler they are, and the more aptly they express this Analogy. Hence the old Notation by Letters was more useful than Words writ-

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ten at length: And the modern Notation DIAL. by Figures, expressing the Progression or VII. Analogy of the Names by their simple Places, is much preferable to that for Ease and Expedition, as the Invention of Algebraical Symbols is to this for extensive and general Use. As Arithmetic and Algebra are Sciences of great Clearness, Cerminty, and Extent, which are immediately conversant about Signs, upon the skilful Use and Management whereof they intirely depend, so a little Attention to them may possibly help us to judge of the Progress of the Mind in other Sciences; which, though differing in Nature, Defign, and Object, may yet agree in the general Methods of Proof and Inquiry.

XVI. If I mistake not, all Sciences, so far as they are universal and demonstrable by Humane Reason, will be sound conversant about Signs as their immediate Object, though these in the Application are referred to Things: The Reason whereof is not difficult to conceive. For as the Mind is better acquainted with some sort of Objects, which are earlier suggested to it, strike it more sensibly, or are more tasily comprehended than others, it is naturally led to substitute these Objects for such

DIAL. fuch as are more fubtile, fleeting, or diff.

VII. cult to conceive. Nothing, I fay, is more natural, than to make the Things w know, a Step towards those we do no know; and to explain and represent Things less familiar by others which an more fo. Now, it is certain we imagin before we reflect, and we perceive b Sense before we imagine: and of all ou Senses the Sight is the most clear, distinct various, agreeable, and comprehensiv Hence it is natural to affift the Intelled by the Imagination, the Imagination b Sense, and the other Senses by Sigh Hence, Figures, Metaphors, and Type We illustrate spiritual Things by corpo real: we substitute Sounds for Thought and written Letters for Sounds, Emblem Symbols, and Hieroglyphics for Thing too obscure to strike, and too various too fleeting to be retained. We fubstitu Things imaginable for things intelligible fenfible Things for imaginable, small Things for those that are too great to com prehend eafily, and greater Things for fuch as are too small to be discerned d stinctly, present Things for absent, po manent for perishing, and visible for it visible. Hence the Use of Models at Diagrams. Hence right Lines are subst tuted for Time, Velocity, and oth thin

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things of very different Natures. Hence DIAL. we speak of Spirits in a figurative Style, VII. expressing the Operations of the Mind by Allusions and Terms, borrowed from fenfible Things, fuch as apprehend, conceive, reflect, discourse, and such like: And hence those Allegories which illustrate Things intellectual by Visions exhibited to the Fancy. Plato, for instance, represents the Mind presiding in her Vehicle by the Driver of a winged Chariot, which fometimes moults and droops and is drawn by two Horses, the one good and of a good Race, the other of a contrary Kind; fymbolically expressing the Tendency of the Mind towards the Divinity, as she soars or is born aloft by two Instincts like Wings, the one in the Intellect towards Truth, the other in the Will towards Excellence, which Instincts moult or are weaken'd by fenfual Inclinations; expressing also her alternate Elevations and Depressions, the Struggles between Reason and Appetite, like Horses that go an unequal Pace, or draw different ways, embarraffing the Soul in her Progress to Perfection. I am inclined to think the Doctrine of Signs a Point of great Importance, and general Extent, which, if duly confidered, would cast no small Light upon Things, and afford

DIAL. ford a just and genuine Solution of many VII. Difficulties.

XVII. Thus much, upon the whole, may be faid of all Signs: that they do not always fuggest Ideas fignified to the Mind: that when they fuggest Ideas, they are not general abstract Ideas: that they have other Uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting Ideas, fuch as raising proper Emotions, producing certain Dispofitions or Habits of Mind, and directing our Actions in pursuit of that Happiness, which is the ultimate End and Defign, the primary Spring and Motive, that fets rational Agents at work: that the true End of Speech, Reason, Science, Faith, Assent, in all its different Degrees, is not meerly, or principally, or always the imparting or acquiring of Ideas, but rather fomething of an active, operative Nature, tending to a conceived Good; which may fometimes be obtained, not only although the Ideas marked are not offered to the Mind, but even although there should be no Possibility of offering or exhibiting any fuch Idea to the Mind: for instance, the Algebraic Mark, which denotes the Root of a negative Square, hath its Use in Logistic Operations, although it be impossible to form an Idea of any fuch

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fuch Quantity. And what is true of Al-DIAL. gebraic Signs, is also true of Words or Language, modern Algebra being in fact a more short, apposite, and artificial Sort of Language, and it being possible to express by Words at length, though less conveniently, all the Steps of an Algebraical Process. And it must be confessed, that even the Mathematical Sciences themfelves, which above all others are reckoned the most clear and certain, if they are confidered, not as Instruments to direct our Practice, but as Speculations to employ our Curiofity, will be found to fall short in many Instances of those clear and distinct Ideas, which, it seems, the Minute Philosophers of this Age, whether knowingly or ignorantly, expect and infift upon in the Mysteries of Religion.

XVIII. Be the Science or Subject what it will, when foever Men quit Particulars for Generalities, things Concrete for Abfractions, when they for fake practical Views, and the useful Purposes of Knowledge for barren Speculation, considering Means and Instruments as ultimate Ends, and labouring to obtain precise I deas which they suppose indiscriminately annexed to all Terms, they will be sure to embarrass themselves with Difficulties and Disputes.

DIAL.putes. Such are those which have sprung up in Geometry about the Nature of the Angle of Contact, the Doctrine of Proportions, of Indivisibles, Infinitefimals, and divers other Points; notwithstanding all which, that Science is very rightly efteemed an excellent and useful one, and is really found to be fo in many Occafions of Humane Life; wherein it governs and directs the Actions of Men, fo that by the Aid or Influence thereof those Operations become just and accurate, which would otherwise be faulty and uncertain. And from a parity of Reason, we should not conclude any other Doctrines which govern, influence, or direct the Mind of Man to be, any more than that, the less true or excellent, because they afford Matter of Controversy and useless Speculation to curious and licentious Wits: particularly those Articles of our Christian Faith, which, in proportion as they are believed, perfuade, and, as they perfuade, influence the Lives and Actions of Men. As to the Perplexity of Contradictions and abstracted Notions, in all parts whether of Humane Science or Divine Faith, Cavillers may equally object, and unwary Persons incur, while the judicious avoid There is no need to depart from the received Rules of Reasoning to justify the Belief

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Belief of Christians. And if any pious DIAL. Men think otherwise, it may be supposed VII. an Effect, not of Religion or of Reason, but only of Humane Weakness. If this Age be fingularly productive of Infidels, I shall not therefore conclude it to be more knowing, but only more prefuming, than former Ages: And their Conceit, I doubt. is not the Effect of Consideration. me it feems, that the more thoroughly and extensively any Man shall consider and fcan the Principles, Objects, and Methods of proceeding in Arts and Sciences, the more he will be convinced, there is no Weight in those plausible Objections that are made against the Mysteries of Faith. which it will be no difficult Matter for him to maintain or justify in the received Method of arguing, on the common Principles of Logic, and by numberless avow'd parallel Cases, throughout the several Branches of Humane Knowledge, in all which the Supposition of abstract Ideas creates the same Difficulties. ALC. According to this Doctrine, all Points may be alike maintained. There will be nothing abfurd in Popery, not even Tranfubstantiation. CRI. Pardon me. This Doctrine justifies no Article of Faith which is not contained in Scripture, or which is repugnant to Humane Reason, N 2 which

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Kind: all which is very different from our not having a distinct or an abstract Idea of a Point.

XIX. ALC. I will allow, Euphranor, this Reasoning of yours to have all the Force you meant it should have. I freely own there may be Mysteries: that we may believe, where we do not understand: and that Faith may be of use although its Object is not distinctly apprehended. In a word, I grant there may be Faith and Mysteries in other things but not in Religion: And that for this plain Reason: because it is absurd to suppose, there should be any fuch thing as Religion: and if there be no Religion it follows there cannot be Religious Faith or Mysteries. Religion, it is evident, implies the Worship of a God, which Worship supposeth Rewards and Punishments, which suppose Merits and Demerits, Actions good and evil, and these suppose Humane Liberty, a thing impossible: and consequently Religion a thing built thereon must be an unreasonable absurd thing. There can be no rational Hopes or Fears where there is no Guilt, nor any Guilt where there is nothing done, but what unavoidably follows

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lows from the Structure of the WorldDIAL. and the Laws of Motion. Corporeal Ob- VII. jects strike on the Organs of Sense, whence enfues a Vibration in the Nerves, which, being communicated to the Soul or Animal Spirit in the Brain or Root of the Nerves, produceth therein that Motion called Volition: And this produceth a new Determination in the Spirits, caufing them to flow into fuch Nerves as must necessarily by the Laws of Mechanism produce such certain Actions. This being the Case, it follows that those things, which vulgarly pass for Humane Actions, are to be esteemed Mechanical, and that they are falfly afcribed to a free Principle. There is therefore no Foundation for Praise or Blame, Fear or Hope, Reward or Punishment, nor confequently for Religion, which, as I observed before, is built upon and supposeth those things. EUPH. You imagine, Alciphron, if I rightly understand you, that Man is a fort of Organ played on by outward Objects, which according to the different Shape and Texture of the Nerves produce different Motions and Effects therein. ALC. Man may, indeed, be fitly compared to an Organ: but a Puppet is the very Thing. You must know, that certain Particles issuing forth in right Lines from all fensible Objects N 3 com-

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DIAL. compose so many Rays, or Filaments, which drive, draw, and actuate every part of the Soul and Body of Man, just as Threads or Wires do the Joints of that little wooden Machine vulgarly called a Puppet: with this only Difference that the latter are gross and visible to common Eyes, whereas the former are too fine and fubtile to be discerned by any but a sagacious Free-thinker. This admirably accounts for all those Operations, which we have been taught to ascribe to a thinking Principle within us. EUPH. This is an ingenious Thought, and must be of great Use in freeing Men from all Anxiety about moral Notions, as it transfers the Principle of Action from the Humane Soul to things outward and foreign. But I have my Scruples about it. For you fuppose the Mind in a literal Sense to be moved, and its Volitions to be meer Mo-Now, if another should affirm, as it is not impossible some or other may, that the Soul is incorporeal, and that Motion is one thing and Volition another, I would fain know how you could make your Point clear to fuch a one. be owned very clear to those who admit the Soul to be corporeal, and all her Acts to be but so many Motions. Upon this Supposition, indeed, the Light wherein you you that den and Groed I ty is gran plain thin as a fore of wan

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you place Humane Nature is no less true, DIAL. than it is fine and new. But let any one VII. deny this Supposition, which is easily done, and the whole Superstructure falls to the Ground. If we grant the abovementioned Points, I will not deny a fatal Necessity must ensue. But I see no reason for granting them. On the contrary it seems plain, that Motion and Thought are two things as really and as manifestly distinct as a Triangle and a Sound. It seems therefore, that in Order to prove the Necessity of Humane Actions, you suppose what wants Proof as much as the very Point to be proved.

XX. ALC. But supposing the Mind incorporeal, I shall, nevertheless, be able to prove my Point. Not to amuse you with far-fetched Arguments, I shall only defire you to look into your own Breast and observe how things pass there, when an Object offers it felf to the Mind. First the Understanding considers it: in the next place the Judgment decrees about it, as a thing to be chosen or rejected, to be omitted or done, in this or that manner: And this Decree of the Judgment doth necessarily determine the Will, whose Office is meerly to execute what is ordained by another Faculty: Confequently N 4

DIAL. there is no fuch thing as Freedom of the VII. Will. For that which is necessary cannot be free. In Freedom there should be an Indifference to either fide of the Question, a Power to act or not to act, without Prescription or Control: and without this Indifference and this Power, it is evident the Will cannot be free. But it is no less evident, that the Will is not indifferent in its Actions, being absolutely determined and governed by the Judgment. Now whatever moves the Judgment, whether the greatest present Uneafiness, or the greatest apparent Good, or whatever else it be, it is all one to the Point in The Will being ever concluded and controlled by the Judgment is in all Cases alike under Necessity. There is, indeed, throughout the whole of Humane Nature, nothing like a Principle of Freedom, every Faculty being determined in all its Acts by fomething foreign to it. The Understanding, for instance, cannot alter its Idea, but must necessarily see it such as it presents it self. The Appetites by a natural Necessity are carried towards their Reason cannot infer respective Objects. indifferently any thing from any thing, but is limited by the Nature and Connexion of Things, and the eternal Rules of Reasoning. And as this is confessedly the Cafe

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Case of all other Faculties, so it equally DIAL. holds with respect to the Will it self, as VII. hath been already shewn. And if we may credit the Divine Characterizer of our Times, this above all others must be allowed the most slavish Faculty. " Appe-" tite (faith that noble Writer) which is " elder Brother to Reason, being the Lad " of stronger Growth, is sure on every " Contest to take the Advantage of draw-" ing all to his own Side: And Will, fo " highly boafted, is but at best a Foot-" ball or Top between those Youngsters " who prove very unfortunately matched. " till the youngest, instead of now and " then a Kick or Lash bestow'd to little " purpose, forfakes the Ball or Top it " felf, and begins to lay about his elder " Brother." CRI. This beautiful Parable for Style and Manner might equal those of a known English Writer, in low Life renowned for Allegory, were it not a little incorrect, making the weaker Lad find his Account in laying about the ALC. This is helped by fupstronger. posing the stronger Lad the greater Coward. But, be that as it will, fo far is it relates to the Point in hand, this sa clear State of the Case. The same Point may be also proved from the Precience of God. That which is certainly foreknown

DIAL. foreknown will certainly be. And what is certain is necessary. And necessary Actions cannot be the Effect of Free-will. Thus you have this fundamental Point of our Free-thinking Philosophy demonstrated different ways. EUPH. Tell me, Alciphron, do you think it implies a Contradiction, that God should make a Creature Free? ALC. I do not. EUPH. It is then possible there may be such a thing. ALC. This I do not deny. EUPH. You can therefore conceive and suppose such a Free Agent. ALC. Admitting that I can; what then? EUPH. Would not fuch an one think that he acted? ALC. He would. EUPH. And condemn himself for fome Actions and approve himself ALC. This too I grant, for others? EUPH. Would he not think he deserved Reward or Punishment? ALC. He would. EUPH. And are not all these Characters actually found in Man? ALC. They are, EUPH. Tell me now, what other Character of your supposed Free Agent may not actually be found in Man? For if there is none such, we must conclude that ome Que Man hath all the Marks of a Free Agent. May per ALC. Let me see! I was certainly overseen in granting it possible, even for Almighty Power, to make such a thing as a onsider Free Agent. I wonder how I came to see to se

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make such an absurd Concession, after DIAL. what had been, as I observed before, demonstrated fo many different ways. EUPH. Certainly whatever is possible may be supposed: And whatever doth not imply a Contradiction is possible to an infinite Power: Therefore if a rational Agent implieth no Contradiction, such a Being may be supposed. Perhaps from this Supposition I might infer Man to be free: But I will not suppose him that free Agent; fince, it seems, you pretend to have demonstrated the contrary. O Alciphron, it is vulgarly observed that Men udge of others by themselves. udging of me by this Rule, you may e mistaken. Many things are plain to one of your Sagacity, which are not so to ne, who am often puzzled rather than nlightened by those very Proofs, that with you pass for clear and evident. And, ndeed, be the Inference never so just, yet long as the Premises are not clear, I annot be thoroughly convinced. You For if hust give me leave therefore to propose le that ome Questions, the Solution of which pay perhaps shew what at present I am ot able to discern. ALC. I shall Agent. overor Al. ave what hath been faid with you, to ng as a mider and ruminate upon. It is now ame to fet out on our Journey: there is, make 5

DIAL therefore, no room for a long String of VII. Question and Answer.

XXI. EUPH. I shall then only beg leave in a fummary Manner, to make a Remark or two on what you have advanced. In the first place I observe, you take that for granted which I cannot grant, when you affert whatever is certain the fame to To me, certain and nebe necessary. ceffary feem very different; there being nothing in the former Notion that implies Constraint, nor consequently which may not confift with a Man's being accountable for his Actions. If it is foreseen that such an Action shall be done: may it not also be foreseen that it shall be an Effect of humane Choice and Liberty? In the next place I observe, that you very nicely abstract and distinguish the Actions of the Mind, Judgment, and Will: That you make use of such Terms as Power, Faculty, Act, Determination, Indifference, Freedom, Necessity, and the like, as if they stood for distinct abstract Ideas: And that this Supposition seems to enfnare the Mind into the same Perplexities and Errors, which, in all other Instances, are observed to attend the Doctrine of Abstraction. It is felf evident, that there is such a thing as Motion; and yet there have been round Philo-

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Philosophers, who, by refined Reasoning, DIAL. wou'd undertake to prove there was no Walking before them was fuch thing. thought the proper Way to confute those ingenious Men. It is no less evident, that Man is a free Agent: and though by abfracted Reasonings you shou'd puzzle me, and feem to prove the contrary, yet fo long as I am conscious of my own Actions, this inward Evidence of plain Fact will bear me up against all your Reasonings, however fubtile and refined. The confuting plain Points by obscure ones, may perhaps convince me of the Ability of your Philofophers, but never of their Tenets. I cannot conceive why the acute Cratylus should suppose a Power of Acting in the Appetite and Reason, and none at all in the Will? Allowing, I say, the Distinction of three fuch Beings in the Mind, I do not fee how this could be true. But if I cannot abfract and diftinguish so many Beings in the Soul of Man so accurately as you do, I do not find it necessary, fince it is evident to me in the gross and concrete that I am a free Agent. Nor will it avail to lay, the Will is governed by the Judgment, or determined by the Object, while, in every sudden common Cause, I cannot discern nor abstract the Decree of the Judgment from the Command of the Will; while

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thing round Phile DIAL. while I know the sensible Object to be ab. VII. folutely inert: And laftly, while I am confcious that I am an active Being, who can and do determine my felf. If I should fuppose things spiritual to be corporeal, or refine things actual and real into general abstracted Notions, or by metaphyfical Skill split things simple and individual into manifold Parts, I do not know what may follow: But if I take things as they are, and ask any plain untutored Man, whether he acts or is free in this or that particular Action, he readily affents, and I as readily believe him from what I find within. And thus, by an Induction of Particulars, I may conclude Man to be a free Agent, although I may be puzzled to define or conceive a Notion of Freedom in general and abstract. And if Man be free, he is plainly accountable. But if you shall define, abstract, suppose, and it shall follow that according to your Definitions, Abstractions, and Suppositions, there can be no Freedom in Man, and you shall thence infer that he is not accountable, shall make bold to depart from your metaphyfical abstracted Sense, and appeal to the common Sense of Mankind.

XXII. If we confider the Notions that obtain in the World of Guilt and Merit Praise

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Praise and Blame, accountable and unac-DIAL. countable, we shall find the common Que- VII. ftion in order to applaud or censure, acquit or condemn a Man, is, whether he did fuch an Action? and whether he was himself when he did it? which comes to It should seem therefore the fame thing. that in the ordinary Commerce of Mankind, any Person is esteemed accountable fimply as he is an Agent. And though you should tell me that Man is inactive, and that the sensible Objects act upon him, yet my own Experience affures me of the contrary. I know I act, and what I act I am accountable for. And if this be true, the Foundation of Religion and Morality remains unshaken. Religion, I say, is concerned no farther than that Manshould be accountable: And this he is according to my Sense, and the common Sense of the World, if he acts: and that he doth act is self evident. The Grounds, therefore, and Ends of Religion are secured: whether your philosophic Notion of Liberty agrees with Man's Actions or no; and whether his Actions are certain or contingent; the Question being not whether he did it with a Free Will? or what determined his Will? not, whether it was certain or foreknown that he would do it? but only whether he did it wilfully? as what must entitle him

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DIAL. to the Guilt or Merit of it. ALC. But VII. still, the Question recurs, whether Man be Free? EUPH. To determine this Question, ought we not first to determine what is meant by the word Free? ALC. We ought. EUPH. In my Opinion, a Man is said to be Free, so far forth as he can do what he will. Is this fo, or is it not? ALC. It feems fo. EUPH. Man therefore acting according to his Will, is to be accounted Free. ALC. This I admit to be true in the Vulgar Sense. But a Philosopher goes higher, and inquires whether Man be free to will? EUPH. That is, whether he can will as he wills? I know not how Philosophical it may be to ask this Question, but in feems very idle. The Notions of Guilt, and Merit, Justice and Reward are in the Minds of Men, antecedent to all Metaphyfical Difquifitions: And according to those received natural Notions, it is not doubted that Man is accountable, that he acts, and is felf-determined.

XXIII. But a Minute Philosopher shall, in virtue of wrong Suppositions, confound things most evidently distinct; Body, for instance, with Spirit, Motion with Volition, Certainty with Necessity; and an Abstracter or Refiner shall so analyse the most simple

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simple instantaneous Act of the Mind, as DIAL. to diftinguish therein divers Faculties and VII. Tendencies, Principles and Operations, Causes and Effects; and having abstracted, supposed, and reasoned upon Principles gratuitous and obscure, he will conclude it is no Act at all, and Man no Agent, but a Puppet, or an Organ play'd on by outward Objects, and his Will a Top or a Foot-ball. And this passeth for Philosophy and Free-thinking. Perhaps this may be what it passeth for, but it by no means feems a natural or just way of thinking. To me it feems, that if we begin from Things particular and concrete, and thence proceed to general Notions and Conclufions, there will be no Difficulty in this Matter. But if we begin with Generalities, and lay our Foundation in abstract Ideas, we shall find our felves entangled and loft in a Labyrinth of our own ma-I need not observe, what every one must see, the ridicule of proving Man no Agent, and yet pleading for Free Thought and Action, of fetting up at once for Advocates of Liberty and Necessity. I have hastily thrown together these Hints or Remarks, on what you call a fundamental Article of the Minute Philosophy, and your Method of proving it, which seems to furnish an admirable Specimen of the VOL. II. Sophi-

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e most simple DIAL. Sophistry of abstract Ideas. If in this sum.

mary way I have been more dogmatical than became me, you must excuse what you occasioned, by declining a joint and leifurely Examination of the Truth. ALC. I think we have examined Matters fufficiently. CRI. To all you have faid against humane Liberty, it is a sufficient Answer to observe that your Arguments proceed upon an erroneous Supposition, either of the Soul's being corporeal, or of abstract Ideas: not to mention other gross Mistakes and gratuitous Principles. You might as well suppose, that the Soul is red or blue, as that it is folid. You might as well make the Will any thing else as And whatever you infer from Motion. fuch Premises, which (to speak in the foftest manner) are neither proved nor probable, I make no difficulty to reject. You distinguish in all humane Actions between the last Decree of the Judgment and the Act of the Will. You confound Certainty with Necessity: you inquire, and your Inquiry amounts to an abfurd Question: whether Man can will as he wills? As evidently true as is this identical Proposition, so evidently false must that way of thinking be, which led you to make a Question of it. You take so granted, that the Mind is inactive, bu tha

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that its Ideas act upon it: as if the con-DIAL. trary were not evident to every Man of VII. common Sense, who cannot but know, that it is the Mind which confiders its Ideas, chooses, rejects, examines, deliberates, decrees, in one word acts about them, and not they about it. Upon the whole, your Premises being obscure and false, the fundamental Point, which you pretend to demonstrate fo many different ways, proves neither Sense nor Truth in any. And on the other hand, there is not need of much Inquiry to be convinced of two Points, than which none are more evident, more obvious, and more univerfally admitted by Men of all forts, learned or unlearned, in all Times and Places, to wit, that Man acts and is accountable for his Actions. Whatever Abstracters, Refiners, or Men prejudiced to a false Hypothesis may pretend, it is, if I mistake not, evident to every thinking Man of common Sense, that humane Minds are so far from being Engines or Foot-balls, acted upon and bandied about by corporeal Objects, without any inward Principle of Freedom or Action, that the only original true Notions that we have of Freedom, Agent, or Action, are obtained by reflecting on our felves, and the Operations of our own Minds. The Singularity and Credulity of Minute Phi-0 2

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VII. abused by the Paralogisms of three or four eminent Patriarchs of Infidelity in the last Age, is, I think, not to be matched; there being no Instance of bigoted Superstition, the Ringleaders whereof have been able to seduce their Followers, more openly and more widely from the plain Dictates of Nature and common Sense.

XXIV. ALC. It has been always an Objection against the Discoverers of Truth, that they depart from received Opinions. The Character of Singularity is a Tax on Free-thinking: And as fuch we most willingly bear it, and glory in it. A Genuine Philosopher is never modest in a false Sense, to the preferring Authority before Reason, or an old and common Opinion before a true one. Which false Modesty, as it discourages Men from treading in untrodden Paths, or striking out new Light, is above all other Qualities the greatest Enemy to Freethinking. CRI. Authority in disputable Points will have its Weight with a judicious Mind, which yet will follow Evidence wherever it leads. Without preferring we may allow it a good Second to Reason. Your Gentlemen, therefore, of the Minute Philosophy, may spare a World of Common Place upon Reason, and Light,

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and Discoveries. We are not attached to DIAL. Authority against Reason, nor afraid of VII. untrodden Paths that lead to Truth, and are ready to follow a new Light when we are fure it is no ignis fatuus. Reason may oblige a Man to believe against his Inclinations: but why should a Man quit salutary Notions for others not less unreasonable than pernicious? Your Schemes, and Principles, and boafted Demonstrations have been at large proposed and examined. You have shifted your Notions, fucceffively retreated from one Scheme to another, and in the End renounced them all. Your Objections have been treated in the same Manner, and with the fame Event. If we except all that relates to the Errors and Faults of particular Persons, and Difficulties which, from the Nature of Things, we are not obliged to explain; it is furprifing to fee, after such magnificent Threats, how little remains, that can amount to a pertinent Obection against the Christian Religion. What you have produced has been tried by the fair Test of Reason: and though you should hope to prevail by Ridicule when you cannot by Reason, yet in the upshot lapprehend you will find it impracticable to destroy all Sense of Religion. Make your Countrymen ever so vicious, igno-03 rant,

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DIAL. rant, and profane, Men will still be difposed to look up to a supreme Being. Relior gion, right or wrong, will fubfift in some Shape or other, and some Worship there will furely be either of God or the Creature. As for your Ridicule, can any thing be more ridiculous, than to fee the most unmeaning Men of the Age fet up for Free-thinkers, Men fo strong in Affertion, and yet so weak in Argument; Advocates for Freedom introducing a Fatality, Patriots trampling on the Laws of their Country, and Pretenders to Virtue, destroying the Motives of it? Let any impartial Man but cast an Eye on the Opinions of the Minute Philosophers, and then fay if any thing can be more ridiculous, than to believe fuch things, and at the fame time laugh at Credulity,

> XXV. LYS. Say what you will, we have the Laughers on our fide: And as for your Reasoning I take it to be another Name for Sophistry. CRI. And I suppose by the same Rule you take your own Sophisms for Arguments. To plainly, I know no fort of Sophism that is not employed by Minute Philosophers against Religion. They are guilty of a Petitio Principii, in taking for granted that we believe Contradictions; of non Caula

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Causa pro Causa, in affirming that uncha-DIAL. ritable Feuds and Discords are the Effects VII. of Christianity; of Ignoratio elenchi, in expecting Demonstration where we pretend only to Faith. If I was not afraid to offend the Delicacy of polite Ears, nothing were easier than to assign Instances of every kind of Sophism, which would shew how skilful your own Philosophers are in the Practice of that Sophistry you impute to others. EUPH. For my own part, if Sophistry be the Art or Faculty of deceiving other Men, I must acquit They feem to these Gentlemen of it. have led me a Progress through Atheism, Libertinism, Enthusiasm, Fatalism, not to convince me of the Truth of any of them, fo much as to confirm me in my own way of thinking. They have exposed their fairy Ware not to cheat but divert us. As I know them to be professed Masters of Ridicule, so in a serious Sense I know not what to make of them. ALC. You do not know what to make of us! I should be forry you did. He must be a superficial Philosopher that is loon fathomed.

XXVI. CRI. The ambiguous Character is, it feems, the fure way to Fame and Esteem in the learned World, as it stands consti-0 4 tuted

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DIAL. tuted at present. When the Ingenious VII. Reader is at a Loss to determine whether his Author be Atheist or Deist or Polytheift, Stoic or Epicurean, Sceptic or Dogmatist, Infidel or Enthusiast, in jest or in earnest, he concludes him without Hesitation to be anigmatical and profound. In fact, it is true of the most admired Writers of the Age, That no Man alive can tell what to make of them, or what they would be at. ALC. We have among us Moles that dig deep under Ground, and Eagles that foar out of fight. We can act all Parts and become all Opinions, putting them on or off with great freedom of Wit and Humour. EUPH. It feems then you are a Pair of inscrutable, unfathomable, fashionable Philosophers. ALC. It cannot be denied. EUPH. But, I remember, you fet out with an open dogmatical Air, and talked of plain Principles and evident Reasoning, promised to make things as clear as Noon-day, to extirpate wrong Notions and plant right in their stead. Soon after, you began to recede from your first Notions and adopt others: you advanced one while and retreated another, yielded and retracted, faid and unfaid: And after having followed you through so many untrodden Paths and intricate Mazes I find my felf never the nearer.

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nearer. ALC. Did we not tell you the DIAL. Gentlemen of our Sect are great Profi- VII. cients in Raillery? EUPH. But, methinks, it is a vain Attempt, for a plain Man of any fettled Belief or Principles to engage with fuch flippery, fugitive, changeable Philosophers. It seems as if a Man should stand still in the same place, while his Adversary chooses and changes his Situation, has full Range and Liberty to traverse the Field, and attack him on all Sides and in all Shapes, from a nearer or farther distance, on Horse-back or on Foot, in light or heavy Armour, in close Fight or with missive Weapons. ALC. It must be owned, a Gentleman hath great Advantage over a strait-laced Pedant or Bigot. EUPH. But after all, what am I the better for the Conversation of two such knowing Gentlemen? I hoped to have unlearned my Errors, and to have learned Truths from you, but, to my great Difappointment, I do not find that I am either untaught or taught. ALC. To unteach Men their Prejudices is a difficult Task: And this must first be done, before we can pretend to teach them the Truth. Besides, we have at present no Time to prove and argue. EUPH. But suppose my Mind white Paper, and without being at any Pains to extirpate my Opinions

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DIAL ons, or prove your own, only fay what VII. you would write thereon, or what you would teach me in case I were teachable. Be for once in earnest, and let me know fome one Conclusion of yours before we part: or I shall intreat Crito to violate the Laws of Hospitality towards those, who have violated the Laws of Philosophy, by hanging out false Lights to one benighted in Ignorance and Error. I appeal to you (faid he turning to Crito) whether these Philosophical Knighterrants should not be confined in this Castle of yours, till they make Repara-Euphranor has Reason, said Crito, and my Sentence is that you remain here in durance, till you have done fomething towards fatisfying the Engagement I am under, having promised, he should know your Opinions from your felves, which you also agreed to.

> XXVII. ALC. Since it must be so, I will now reveal what I take to be the Sum and Substance, the grand Arcanum and ultimate Conclusion of our Sect, and that in two Words, ΠΑΝΤΑ ΥΠΟΛΗΨΙΣ. CRI. You are then a downright Sceptic. But, Sceptic as you are, you own it, probable there is a God, certain that the Christian Religion is useful, possible it may be true, certain

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certain that if it be, the Minute Philosophers DIAL. are in a bad way. This being the Case, how VII. can it be questioned what Course a wife Man should take? Whether the Principles of Christians or Infidels are truest may be made a Question, but which are safest can be none. Certainly if you doubt of all Opinions you must doubt of your own: and then, for ought you know, the Christian may be true. The more doubt, the more room there is for Faith, a Sceptic of all Men having the least Right to demand Evidence. But, whatever Uncertainty there may be in other Points, thus much is certain: either there is or is not a God: there is or is not a Revelation: Man either is or is not an Agent: the Soul is or is not Immortal. If the Negatives are not fure, the Affirmatives are possible. If the Negatives are improbable, the Affimatives are probable. In Proportion, as any of your ingenious Men finds himself unable to prove any one of these Negatives, he hath grounds to suspect he may be mistaken. A Minute Philosopher, therefore, that would act a confistent part, should have the Diffidence, the Modesty, and the Timidity, as well as the Doubts, of a Sceptic; not pretend to an Ocean of Light, and then lead us to an Abyss of Darkness. If I have any Notion of Ridicule, this

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VII. what, for ought you know, may be true,
I can make no Sense of it. It is neither
acting as a wise Man with regard to your
own Interest, nor as a good Man with
regard to that of your Country.

XXVIII. Tully faith somewhere, aut undique religionem tolle aut usquequaque conserva: Either let us have no Religion at all, or let it be respected. If any single Instance can be shewn of a People that ever prospered without some Religion, or if there be any Religion better than the Christian, propose it in the grand Assembly of the Nation to change our Constitution, and either live without Religion, or introduce that new Religion. A Sceptic, as well as other Men, is Member of a Community, and can distinguish between Good and Evil, Natural or Political. then his Guide as a Patriot, though he be no Christian. Or, if he doth not pretend even to this Discernment, let him not pretend to correct or alter what he knows nothing of: Neither let him that only doubts behave as if he could demonstrate. Timagoras is wont to say, I find my Country in possession of certain Tenets: they appear to have an useful Tendency, and, as fuch, are encouraged by the Legislature:

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gislature: they make a main part of our DIAL. Constitution: I do not find these Innovators can disprove them, or substitute things more useful and certain in their stead: out of Regard therefore to the Good of Mankind, and the Laws of my Country, I shall aquiesce in them. I do not say Timagoras is a Christian, but I reckon him a Patriot. Not to inquire in a Point of fo great Concern is Folly, but it is still a higher degree of Folly to condemn without inquiring. Lyficles feemed heartily tired of this Conversation. It is now late, said he to Alcipbron, and all things are ready for our Departure. Every one hath his own way of thinking: and it is as impossible for me to adopt another Man's, as to make his Complexion and Features Alciphron pleaded that, having complied with Euphranor's Conditions, they were now at Liberty: And Euphranor answered that, all he desired having been to know their Tenets, he had nothing further to pretend.

XXIX. The Philosophers being gone, I observed to Crito how unaccontable it was, that Men so easy to consute should yet be so difficult to convince. This, said Crito, is accounted for by Aristotle, who tells us that Arguments have not an Ef-

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DIAL. fect on all Men, but only on them whose VII. Minds are prepared by Education and Custom, as Land is for Seed *. Make a Point never fo clear, it is great odds, that a Man, whose Habits and the Bent of whose Mind lie a contray way, shall be unable to comprehend it. So weak a thing is Reason in Competition with Inclination. I replied, this Answer might hold with respect to other Persons and other Times: but when the Question was of inquisitive Men, in an Age wherein Reason was so much cultivated, and Thinking fo much in Vogue, it did not feem fatisfactory. I have known it remarked, faid Crito, by a Man of much Observation, that in the present Age Thinking is more talk'd of but less practised than in ancient times: and that fince the Revival of Learning, Men have read much and wrote much, but thought little: infomuch that with us to think closely and justly is the least part of a learned Man, and none at all of a polite Man. Free-thinkers, it must be owned, make great Pretenfions to Thinking, and yet they shew but little Exactness in it. A lively Man, and what the World calls a Man of Sense are often destitute of this Talent; which is not a mere Gift

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^{*} Ethic. ad Nicom. 1. 10. c. 9.

of Nature, but must be improved and DIAL. perfected, by much Attention and Exer- VII. cife on very different Subjects; a thing of more Pains and Time than the hafty Men of Parts in our Age care to take. Such were the Sentiments of a judicious Friend of mine: And, if you are not already fufficiently convinced of these Truths, you need only cast an Eye on the dark and confused, but nevertheless admired, Writers of this famous Sect: And then you will be able to judge, whether those who are led by Men of fuch wrong Heads can have very good ones of their Such, for instance, was Spinofa, the great Leader of our modern Infidels, in whom are to be found many Schemes and Notions much admired and followed of late Years: Such as undermining Religion, under the Pretence of vindicating and explaining it: The maintaining it not necessary to believe in Christ according to the Flesh: The perfuading Men that Miracles are to be understood only in a fpiritual and allegorical Sense: That Vice is not so bad a thing as we are apt to think: That Men are mere Machines impelled by fatal Necessity. I have heard, faid I, Spinosa represented as a Man of close Argument and Demonstration. He did, replied Crito, demonstrate: but it was

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DIAL. was after fuch a manner, as any one may demonstrate any thing. Allow a Man the Privilege to make his own Definitions of common Words, and it will be no hard matter for him to infer Conclusions, which in one Sense shall be true and in another false, at once seeming Paradoxes and manifest Truisms. For Example, let but Spinosa define natural Right to be natural Power, and he will eafily demonstrate, that whatever a Man can do he hath a right to do *. Nothing can be plainer than the Folly of this Proceeding: but our Pretenders to the lumen siccum are fo paffionately prejudiced against Religion, as to swallow the groffest Nonsense and Sophistry of weak and wicked Writers for Demonstration.

XXX. And so great a Noise do these Men make, with their thinking, reasoning, and demonstrating, as to prejudice some well-meaning Persons against all Use and Improvement of Reason. Honest Demea, having seen a Neighbour of his ruined by the Vices of a Free-thinking Son, contracted such a Prejudice against Thinking, that he would not suffer his own to read Euclid, being told it might teach him to think; till a Friend convinced him the

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^{*} Tractat. Politic. c. 2.

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epidemical Distemper was not Thinking, DI AL. but only the Want and Affectation of it. VII. I know an eminent Free-thinker, who never goes to bed, without a Gallon of Wine in his Belly, and is fure to replenish before the Fumes are off his Brain, by which means he has not had one fober Thought these seven Years; another, that would not for the World lose the Privilege and Reputation of Free-thinking, who games all Night, and lies in Bed all Day: And as for the Outfide or Appearance of Thought in that meagre Minute Philosopher Ibycus, it is an Effect, not of thinking, but of carking, cheating, and writing in an Office. Strange, faid he, that such Men should setup for Free-thinkers! But it is yet more strange that other Men should be out of Conceit with Thinking and Reasoning, for the fake of fuch Pretenders. I answered, that fome good Men conceived an Oppofition between Reason and Religion, Faith and Knowledge, Nature and Grace; and that, consequently, the way to promote Religion was to quench the Light of Nature, and discourage all rational Inquiry.

XXXI. How right the Intentions of these Men may be, replied Crito, I shall not say; but surely their Notions are very Vol. II. P wrong:

DIAL. wrong. Can any thing be more dishonour. VII. able to Religion, than the representing it as an unreasonable, unnatural, ignorant Institution? God is the Father of all Lights, whether natural or revealed. Natural Concupiscence is one thing, and the Light of Nature another. You cannot therefore argue from the former against the latter: Neither can you from Science falfly fo called, against real Knowledge. Whatever therefore is faid of the one in Holy Scripture is not to be interpreted of the other. I infisted that Humane Learning in the Hands of Divines, had, from time to time, created great Disputes and Divisions in the Church. As abstracted Metaphysics, replied Crito, have always had a Tendency to produce Disputes among Christians, as well as other Men; fo it should feem that genuine Truth and Knowledge would allay this Humour, which makes Men facrifice the undisputed Duties of Peace and Charity to disputable Notions. After all, faid I, whatever may be faid for Reason, it is plain, the Sceptics and Infidels of the Age are not to be cured by it. I will not dispute this Point, said Crito: in order to cure a Distemper, you should consider what produced it. Had Men reasoned themselves into a wrong Opinion, one might hope to reason them out of it. But

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this is not the Case; the Infidelity of most DIAL. Minute Philosophers seeming an Effect of VII. very different Motives from Thought and Reason. Little Incidents, Vanity, Difgust, Humour, Inclination, without the least Affistance from Reason, are often known to make Infidels. Where the general Tendency of a Doctrine is disagreeable, the Mind is prepared to relish and improve every thing that with the least Pretence feems to make against it. Hence the coarse Manners of a Country Curate, the polite Manners of a Chaplain, the Wit of a Minute Philosopher, a Jest, a Song, a Tale can ferve instead of a Reason for Infidelity. Bupalus preferred a Rake in the Church, and then made use of him as an Argument against it. Vice, Indolence, Faction, and Fashion, produce Minute Philosophers, and mere Petulancy not a few. Who then can expect a thing so irrational and capricious should yield to Reason? It may, nevertheless, be worth while to argue against such Men, and expose their Fallacies, if not for their own take, yet for the take of others; as it may lessen their Credit, and prevent the growth of their Sect, by removing a Prejudice in their Favour, which sometimes inclines others as well as themselves to think they have made a Monopoly of Humane Reason. XXXII. P 2 .

VII. looks like Reason, is taken from the Variety of Opinions about Religion. This

is a resting Stone to a lazy and supersicial Mind. But one of more Spirit and a juster way of Thinking, makes it a Step whence he looks about, and proceeds to examine, and compare the differing Institutions of Religion. He will observe, which of these is the most sublime and rational in its Doctrines, most venerable in its Mysteries, most useful in its Precepts, most decent in its Worship? Which createth the noblest Hopes, and most worthy Views? He will confider their Rife and Progress: which oweth least to Humane Arts or Arms? Which flatters the Senses and gross Inclinations of Men? Which adorns and improves the most excellent Part of our Nature? Which hath been propagated in the most wonderful Manner? Which hath furmounted the greatest Difficulties, or shew'd the most disinterested Zeal and Sincerity in its Professors? He will inquire, which best accords with Nature and History? He will consider, what savours of the World, and what looks like Wifdom from above? He will be careful to feparate Humane Allay from that which is Divine; and upon the whole, form his Judgment like a reasonable Free-thinker. But

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But instead of taking such a rational Course, DIAL. one of those hasty Sceptics shall conclude VII. without demurring, there is no Wisdom in Politics, no Honesty in Dealings, no Knowledge in Philosophy, no Truth in Religion: And all by one and the same sort of Inserence, from the numerous Examples of Folly, Knavery, Ignorance, and Error, which are to be met with in the World. But, as those who are unknowing in every thing else, imagine themselves sharpsighted in Religion, this learned Sophism is oftenest levelled against Christianity.

XXXIII. In my Opinion, he that would convince an Infidel who can be brought to Reason, ought in the first place clearly to convince him of the Being of a God, it feeming to me, that any Man who is really a Theist, cannot be an Enemy to the Christian Religion: And that the Ignorance or Disbelief of this fundamental Point, is that which at bottom constitutes the Minute Philosopher. I imagine they, who are acquainted with the great Authors in the Minute Philosophy, need not be told of this. The Being of a God is capable of clear Proof, and a proper Object of Humane Reason: whereas the Mysteries of his Nature, and indeed whatever there is of P 3 Mystery

DIAL. Mystery in Religion, to endeavour to explain and prove by Reason, is a vain Attempt. It is sufficient if we can shew there is nothing abfurd or repugnant in our Belief of those Points, and, instead of framing Hypotheses to explain them, we use our Reason only for answering the Objections, brought against them. But on all Occasions, we ought to distinguish the serious, modest, ingenuous Man of Sense, who hath Scruples about Religion, and behaves like a prudent Man in doubt, from the Minute Philosophers, those profane and conceited Men, who must needs proselyte others to their own Doubts, When one of this Stamp presents himself, we should consider what Species he is of: Whether a first or a second-hand Philofopher, a Libertine, Scorner, or Sceptic? Each Character requiring a peculiar Some Men are too ignorant Treatment. to be humble, without which there can be no Docility: But though a Man must in some Degree have Thought, and confidered to be capable of being convinced, yet it is possible the most ignorant may be laugh'd out of his Opinions. I knew a Woman of Sense reduce two Minute Philosophers, who had long been a Nufance to the Neighbourhood, by taking her Cue from their predominant Affectations.

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tions. The one set up for the most in-DIAL. credulous Man upon Earth, the other for VII. the most unbounded Freedom. She observed to the first, that he who had Credulity fufficient to trust the most valuable Things, his Life and Fortune, to his Apothecary and Lawyer, ridiculously affected the Character of Incredulous, by refufing to trust his Soul, a Thing in his own Account but a mere Trifle, to his Parish-Priest. The other, being what you call a Beau, she made sensible how absolute a Slave he was in point of Dress, to him the most important thing in the World, while he was earnestly contending for a Liberty of Thinking, with which he never troubled his Head: and how much more it concerned and became him to affert an Independency on Fashion, and obtain Scope for his Genius, where it was best qualified to exert it self. The Minute Philosophers at first hand are very few, and confidered in themselves, of small Consequence: But their Followers, who pin their Faith upon them, are numerous, and not less confident than credulous; there being fomething in the Air and Manner of these second-hand Philosophers, very apt to disconcert a Man of Gravity and Argument, and much more difficult to be born than the Weight of their. Objections. P 4 XXXIV.

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XXXIV. Crito having made an end, VII. Euphranor declared it to be his Opinion: that it would much conduce to the public Benefit, if, instead of discouraging Free-thinking, there was erected in the midst of this free Country a Dianoetic Academy, or Seminary for Free-thinkers, provided with retired Chambers, and Galleries, and shady Walks and Groves: where, after feven Years spent in Silence and Meditation, a Man might commence a genuine Free-thinker, and from that time forward, have Licence to think what he pleased, and a Badge to distinguish him from Counterfeits. In good earnest, said Crito, I imagine that Thinking is the great Defideratum of the present Age: and that the real Cause of whatever is amiss, may justly be reckoned the general Neglect of Education, in those who need it most, the People of Fashion. What can be expected where those who have the most Influence, have the least Sense, and those who are sure to be followed, fet the worst Example? Where Youth so uneducated are yet fo forward? Where Modesty is esteemed Pusillanimity, and a Deference to Years, Knowledge, Religion, Laws, want of Sense and Spirit! Such untimely Growth of Genius would not have been valued or encouraged by

8

the wife Men of Antiquity; whose Sen-DIAL. timents on this Point are fo ill fuited to VII. the Genius of our Times, that it is to be feared modern Ears could not bear them. But, however ridiculous fuch Maxims might feem to our British Youth, who are so capable and so forward to try Experiments and mend the Constitution of their Country: I believe it will be admitted by Men of Sense, that if the Governing part of Mankind would in these Days, for Experiment's fake, confider themselves in that old Homerical Light as Pastors of the People; whose Duty it was to improve their Flock, they would foon find that this is to be done by an Education very different from the Modern, and otherguess Maxims than those of the Minute Philosophy. If our Youth were really inured to Thought and Reflection, and an Acquaintance with the excellent Writers of Antiquity: we should foon fee that licentious Humour, vulgarly called Free-thinking, banished from the Presence of Gentlemen, together with Ignorance and ill Taste: which as they are inseparable from Vice, so Men follow Vice for the fake of Pleasure, fly from Virtue through an Abhorrence of Pain. Their Minds therefore betimes should be formed and accustomed

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VII. Objects, or, which is the same thing, to have their Inclinations and Aversions rightly placed. Καλῶς χαίρειν ἢ μισεῖν. This, according to Plato and Aristotle, was the ὀρθη ωαιδεία, the right Education *. And those who, in their own Minds, their Health, or their Fortunes, feel the cursed Effects of a wrong one, would do well to consider, they cannot better make amends for what was amiss in themselves, than by preventing the same in their Posterity. While Crito was saying this, Company came in, which put an End to our Conversation.

* Plato in Protag. & Aristot. ethic. ad Nicom. 1. 2.. c. 2. & 1. 10. c. 9.



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TOWARDS A

NEW THEORY

OF

VISION

First Published in the Year M DCC IX.



LONDON:
Printed in the Year MDCC XXXII.

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ESSAY

TOWARDS

A New Theory of Vision.

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Y Design is to shew the Manner, wherein we perceive by Sight the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects. Also to consider the

Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch, and whether there be any Idea common to both Senses.

II. It is, I think, agreed by all, that Distance, of it self and immediately, cannot be seen. For Distance being a Line directed end-wise to the Eye, it projects only one Point in the Fund of the Eye, which Point remains invariably the same,

whether the Distance be longer or shorter.

valued in perceived to be nearer or III. I find it also acknowledged, that the Estimate we make of the Distance of Objects confiderably remote, is rather an Act of Judgment grounded on Experience, than of Sense. For Example, when I perceive a great Number of intermediate Objects, fuch as Houses, Fields, Rivers, and the like, which I have experienced to take up a confiderable Space, I thence form a Judgment or Conclusion, that the Object I see beyond them is at a great Distance. Again, when an Object appears faint and small, which at a near Distance I have experienced to make a vigorous and large Appearance, I instantly conclude it to be far off: And this, 'tis evident is the refult of Experience; without which, from the Faintness and Littleness I should not have inferred any thing concerning the Distance of Objects.

IV. But when an Object is placed at so near a Distance, as that the Interval between the Eyes bears any sensible Proportion to it, the Opinion of speculative Men is, that the two Optic Axes (the Fancy that we see only with one Eye at once being exploded) concurring at the Object do there

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* See Subject. there make an Angle, by means of which, according as it is greater or lesser, the Object is perceived to be nearer or farther off *.

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V. Betwixt which, and the foregoing Manner of estimating Distance, there is this remarkable Difference: That, whereas there was no apparent, necessary Connexion between small Distance and a large and ftrong Appearance, or between great Distance and a little and faint Appearance, there appears a very necessary Connexion between an obtuse Angle and near Distance, and an acute Angle and farther Distance. It does not in the least depend upon Experience, but may be evidently known by any one before he had experienced it, that the nearer the Concurrence of the Optic Axes, the greater the Angle, and the remoter their Concurrence is, the leffer will be the Angle comprehended by them.

VI. There is another way mentioned by Optic Writers, whereby they will have us judge of those Distances, in respect of which the Breadth of the Pupil hath any sensible Bigness: And that is the greater or lesser Divergency of the

Rays,

^{*} See what Descartes and others have written on this Subject.

Rays, which iffuing from the visible Point, do fall on the Pupil: That Point being judged nearest, which is seen by most diverging Rays: and that remoter which is seen by less diverging Rays: And so on, the apparent Distance still increasing, as the Divergency of the Rays decreases, till at length it becomes infinite, when the Rays that fall on the Pupil are to Sense Parallel. And after this manner it is said we perceive Distance when we look only with one Eye.

VII. In this Case also, it is plain we are not beholding to Experience: It being a certain, necessary Truth, that the nearer the direct Rays falling on the Eye approach to a Parallelism, the farther off is the Point of their Intersection, or the visible Point from whence they flow.

VIII. Now though the Accounts here given of perceivving near Distance by Sight are received for true, and accordingly made use of in determining the apparent Places of Objects, they do nevertheless seem very unsatisfactory: And that for these following Reasons.

IX. It is evident that when the Mind perceives any Idea, not immediately and and of of form the Paff ther, as may ne though the Colomance.
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X. M. which is the mea If I do not of a Manifold I for fines wh

MI. No hat Difte the perible, it remains no View hat is in the Act of

XII. In the lain the lain the lain the

and of it self, it must be by the means of some other Idea: Thus, for Instance, the Passions which are in the Mind of another, are of themselves to me invisible. I may nevertheless perceive them by Sight, though not immediately, yet by means of the Colours they produce in the Countenance. We often see Shame or Fear in the Looks of a Man, by perceiving the Changes of his Countenance to Red or Pale.

X. Moreover it is evident that no Idea, which is not it self perceived, can be the means of perceiving any other Idea. Is Idonot perceive the Redness or Paleness of a Man's Face themselves, it is impossible I should perceive by them the Passions which are in his Mind.

XI. Now from SECT. II. it is plain that Distance is in its own Nature impereptible, and yet it is perceived by Sight. It remains, therefore, that it be brought no View by means of some other Idea, that is it self immediately perceived in the Act of Vision.

XII. But those Lines and Angles, by means whereof some Men pretend to exlain the Perception of Distance, are themlyes not at all perceived, nor are they

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hehat in truth ever thought of by those unskilful in Optics. I appeal to any ones Experience, whether upon Sight of an Object, he computes its Distance by the Bigness of the Angle, made by the meeting of the two Optic Axes? Or whether he ever thinks of the greater or lesser Divergency of the Rays, which arrive from any Point to his Pupil? Every one is himself the best Judge of what he perceives, and what not. In vain shall any Man tell me, that I perceive certain Lines and Angles which introduce into my Mind the various Ideas of Distance, so long as I my self am conscious of no such thing.

XIII. Since therefore those Angles and Lines are not themselves perceived by Sight, it follows from S E C T. X. that the Mind doth not by them judge of the Distance of Objects.

XIV. The Truth of this Affertion will be, yet, farther evident to any one that confiders those Lines and Angles have no real Existence in Nature, being only an Hypothesis framed by the Mathematicians, and by them introduced into Optics, that they might treat of that Science in a Geometrical way.

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Principle to explain thall be

XVI. Distance Mediatio felf perc remains Sensation to whicl Distance are intro It is certa look at a cording a us, we a by leffen tween th Turn of fation, v which is greater o

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XV. The last Reason I shall give for rejecting that Doctrine, is, that though we should grant the real Existence of those Optic Angles, &c. and that it was possible for the Mind to perceive them; yet these Principles would not be found fufficient to explain the Phanomena of Distance, as hall be shewn hereafter.

XVI. Now, it being already shewn that Distance is suggested to the Mind, by the Mediation of fome other Idea which is it felf perceived in the Act of Seeing; it remains that we inquire what Ideas, or Sensations there be that attend Vision, unto which we may suppose the Ideas of Distance are connected, and by which they are introduced into the Mind. And First. It is certain by Experience, that when we look at a near Object with both Eyes, acording as it approaches, or recedes from us, we alter the Disposition of our Eyes, by lessening or widening the Interval between the Pupils. This Disposition or Turn of the Eyes is attended with a Sen-This Disposition or fation, which seems to me to be that being which in this Case brings the Idea of athegreater or leffer Distance into the Mind.

> XVII. Not that there is any natural or necessary Connexion between the Senfation

fation we perceive by the Turn of the Eyes, and greater or leffer Distance: but because the Mind has by constant Experience found the different Sensations corresponding to the different Dispositions of the Eyes, to be attended each with a different Degree of Distance in the Object; There has grown an Habitual or Customary Connexion between those two forts of Ideas, fo that the Mind no fooner perceives the Sensation arising from the different Turn it gives the Eyes, in order to bring the Pupils nearer, or farther afunder, but it withal perceives the different Idea of Distance which was wont to be connected with that Sensation: Just as upon hearing a certain Sound, the Idea is immediately suggested to the Understanding, which Custom had united with it.

XVIII. Nor do I see, how I can easily be mistaken in this Matter. I know evidently that Distance is not perceived of it self. That by Consequence, it must be perceived by means of some other Idea which is immediately perceived, and varies with the different Degrees of Distance. I know also that the Sensation arising from the Turn of the Eyes is of it self immediately perceived, and various Degrees thereof are connected with different Distances,

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stances, which never fail to accompany them into my Mind, when I view an Object distinctly with both Eyes, whose Distance is so small that in respect of it the Interval between the Eyes has any considerable Magnitude.

XIX. I know it is a received Opinion, that by altering the Disposition of the Eyes. the Mind perceives whether the Angle of the Optic Axes, or the lateral Angles comprehended between the Interval of the Eyes and the Optic Axes, are made greater or leffer; and that accordingly by a kind of Natural Geometry, it judges the Point of their Intersection to be nearer, or farther off. But that this is not true, I am convinced by my own Experience, fince I am not conscious, that I make any such use of the Perception I have by the Turn of my Eyes. And for me to make those Judgments, and draw those Conclusions from it, without knowing that I do fo, feems altogether incomprehenfible.

XX. From all which it follows, that the Judgment we make of the Distance of an Object, viewed with both Eyes, is entirely the Result of Experience. If we had not constantly found certain Sensations arising from the various Disposition of

the

of Distance, we should never make those sudden Judgments from them, concerning the Distance of Objects: no more than we would pretend to judge of a Man's Thoughts by his pronouncing Words we had never heard before.

XXI. Secondly, An Object placed at a certain Distance from the Eye, to which the Breadth of the Pupil bears a considerable Proportion, being made to approach, is seen more confusedly: And the nearer it is brought, the more confused Appearance it makes. And this being found constantly to be so, there ariseth in the Mind an Habitual Connexion between the several Degrees of Confusion and Distance; the greater Confusion still implying the lesser Distance, and the lesser Confusion, the greater Distance of the Object.

XXII. This confused Appearance of the Object doth therefore seem to be the Medium, whereby the Mind judgeth of Distance in those Cases, wherein the most approved Writers of Optics will have it judge by the different Divergency, with which the Rays flowing from the Radiating oint fall on the Pupil. No Man, I believe, will pretend to see or feel those ima-

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imaginary Angles, that the Rays are supposed to form according to their various
Inclinations on his Eye. But he cannot
choose Seeing whether the Object appear
more or less confused. It is therefore a
manifest Consequence from what hath been
demonstrated, that instead of the greater,
or lesser Divergency of the Rays, the Mind
makes use of the greater or lesser Confusedness of the Appearance, thereby to determine the apparent Place of an Object.

XXIII. Nor doth it avail to fay, there is not any necessary Connexion between confused Vision and Distance, great or small. For I ask any Man, what necessary Connexion he sees between the Redness of a Blush and Shame? And yet no sooner shall he behold that Colour to arise in the Face of another, but it brings into his Mind the Idea of that Passion which hath been observed to accompany it.

XXIV. What seems to have missed the Writers of Optics in this Matter is, that they imagine Men judge of Distance, as they do of a Conclusion in Mathematics; betwixt which and the Premises it is indeed absolutely requisite there be an apparent, necessary Connexion: But it is far otherwise, in the sudden Judgments Men Vol. II.

make of Distance. We are not to think, that Brutes and Children, or even grown reasonable Men, whenever they perceive an Object to approach, or depart from them, do it by virtue of Geometry and Demonstration.

XXV. That one Idea may suggest another to the Mind, it will suffice that they have been observed to go together, without any Demonstration of the Necessity of their Coexistence, or without so much as knowing what it is that makes them so to coexist. Of this there are innumerable Instances, of which no one can be ignorant.

XXVI. Thus, greater Confusion having been constantly attended with nearer Distance, no sooner is the former Idea perceived, but it suggests the latter to our Thoughts. And if it had been the ordinary Course of Nature, that the farther off an Object were placed, the more confused it should appear, it is certain, the very same Perception, that now makes us think an Object approaches, would then have made us to imagine it went farther off. That Perception, abstracting from Custom and Experience, being equally fitted to produce the Idea of great Distance, or small Distance, or no Distance at all. XXVII.

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tance VII. at the Distance above specified, and brought nearer to the Eye, we may nevertheless prevent, at least for some time, the Appearances growing more confused, by straining the Eye. In which Case, that Sensation supplies the place of confused Vision, in aiding the Mind to judge of the Distance of the Object; it being esteemed so much the nearer, by how much the Effort or Straining of the Eye in order to distinct Vision is greater.

XXVIII. I have here fet down those Sensations or Ideas, that seem to be the constant and general Occasions of introducing into the Mind the different Ideas of near Distance. It is true in most Cases, that divers other Circumstances contribute to frame our Idea of Distance, to wit, the particular Number, Size, Kind, &c. of the things seen. Concerning which, as well as all other the forementioned Occasions which suggest Distance, I shall only observe, they have none of them, in their own Nature, any Relation or Connexion with it: Nor is it possible, they should ever fignify the various Degrees thereof, otherwise than as by Experience they have been found to be connected with them.

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XXIX. I

XXIX. I shall proceed upon these Principles to account for a Phænomenon, which has hitherto strangely puzzled the Writers of Optics, and is so far from being accounted for by any of their Theories of Vision, that it is, by their own Confession, plainly repugnant to them: And of Confequence, if nothing else could be objected, were alone sufficient to bring their Credit in Question. The whole Difficulty I shall lay before you in the Words of the learned Dr. Barrow, with which he concludes his Optic Lectures.

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Hæc sunt, quæ circa partem Optica præcipue Mathematicam dicenda mibi suggessit meditatio. Circa reliquas, (qua φυσικώτεραι sunt, adeoque sæpiuscule pro certis principiis plausibiles conjecturas venditare necessum habent) nihil fere quicquam admodum verisimile succurrit, a pervulgatis (ab iis, inquam, qua Keplerus, Scheinerus, Cartefius, & post illos alii tradiderunt) alienum aut diversum. Atqui tacere malo, quam toties oblatam cramben reponere. Proinde receptui cano; nec ita tamen ut prorsus discedam anteaquam improbam quandam difficultatem (pro sinceritate quam & vobis & veritati debeo minime dissimulandam) in medium protulero, qua

quæ doctrinæ nostræ, hactenus inculcatæ, se objicit adversam, ab ea saltem nullam admittit solutionem. Illa, breviter, talis est: Lenti vel Speculo cavo

EBF exponatur punctum visibile A, ita Distans ut Radii ex A manantes ex inflexione versus axem A B cogantur. Sitque radiationis Limes (seu puncti A imago, qualem supra passim statuimus) punctum Z. Inter boc autem & inflectentis verticem Buspiam positus concipiatur Oculus. Quæri jam potest ubi loci debeat punctum A apparere? Retrorsum ad punctum Z videri non fert Natura (cum omnis impressio sen-

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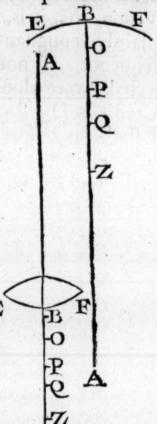
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fum afficiens proveniat a partibus A) ac experientia reclamat. Nostris autem e placitis consequi videtur, ipsum ad partes anticas apparens ab intervallo longissime dissito, (quod & maximum sensibile quodvis Intervallum quodammodo exsuperet) apparere. Cum enim quo Radiis minus divergentibus attingitur Objectum, eo (seclusis utique

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prænotionibus & præjudiciis) longius abesse sentiatur; et quod Parellelos ad Oculum Radios projicit, remotissime positum æstimetur. Exigere Ratio videtur, ut quod convergentibus radiis apprehenditur, adbuc magis, si fieri posset, quoad apparentiam elongetur. Quin & circa Casum bunc generatim inquiri posit, quidnam omnino sit, quod apparentem puncti A locum determinet, faciatque quod constanti ratione nunc propius, nunc remotius appareat? Cui itidem dubio, nibil quicquam ex hactenus dictorum Analogia, responderi posse videtur, nisi debere punctum A perpetuo longissime semotum videri. Verum experientia secus attestatur, illud pro diversa Oculi inter puncta B, Z, positione varie distans; nunquam fere (si unquam) longinquius ipso A libere spectato, subinde vero multo propinquius adparere; quinimo, quo oculum appellentes radii magis convergunt eo speciem Objecti propius accedere. Nempe, si puncto B admoveatur Oculus, suo (ad lentem) fere nativo in loco conspicitur punctum A (vel æque distans, ad Speculum;) ad O reductus oculus ejusce Speciem appropinquantem cernit; ad P adbuc vicinius ipsum existimat; ac ita sensim, donec alicubi tandem, velut ad ad

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ad Q, constituto oculo objectum summe propinguum apparens, in meram confusionem incipiat evanescere. Quæ sane cuncta rationibus atque decretis nostris repugnare videntur, aut cum iis saltem parum amice conspirant. Neque nostram tantum sententiam pulsat boc experimentum; at ex æquo cæteras quas norim omnes, veterem imprimis ac vulgatam nostræ præ reliquis affinem ita convellere videtur, ut ejus vi coactus doctissimus A. Tacquetus isti principio (cui pene soli totam inædificaverat Catoptricam suam) ceu infido ac inconstanti renunciarit, adeoque suam ipse doctrinam labefactarit; id tamen, opinor, minime facturus, fi rem totam inspexisset penitius, atque difficultatis fundum attigisset. Apud me vero non ita pollet bæc, nec eousque præpollebit ulla difficultas, ut abiis, quæ manifeste rationi consentanea video, discedam; præsertim quum ut bic accidit, ejusmodi difficultas in singularis cujuspiam casús disparitate fundetur. Nimirum in præsente casu peculiare quiddam, naturæ subtilitati involutum, delitescit, ægre fortassis, nifi perfectius explorato videndi modo, detegendum. Circa quod nil, fateor, baetenus excogitare potui, quod adblandiretur R 4

A NEW THEORY

diretur animo meo, nedum plane fatisfaceret. Vobis itaque nodum bunc. utinam feliciore conatu, resolvendum committo.

In English as follows.

' I have here delivered what my ' Thoughts have fuggested to me, con-' cerning that part of Optics which is ' more properly Mathematical. As for ' the other Parts of that Science (which ' being rather Physical, do consequently ' abound with plaufible Conjectures in-' stead of certain Principles) there has in them fcarce any thing occur'd to my · Observation, different from what has ' been already said by Kepler, Scheinerus, Descartes, and others. And methinks, 'I had better fay nothing at all, than repeat that which has been so often faid by others. I think it therefore ' high time to take my leave of this Sub-' ject: But before I quit it for good and ' all, the fair and ingenuous Dealing that ' I owe both to You and to Truth, ob-' ligeth me to acquaint you with a cer-' tain untoward Difficulty, which feems directly opposite to the Doctrine I have been hitherto inculcating, at least, ad-' mits of no Solution from it. In short ' it

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it is this. Before the double Con-

vex Glass or Conc
EBF, let the Point
A be placed, at such a
Distance that the Rays
proceeding from A,
after Refraction or
Reflexion, be brought
to Unite somewhere
in the Ax AB. And
suppose the Point of
Union (i. e. the Image of the Point A,
as hath been already
set forth) to be Z; E
between which and B,

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the Vertex of the Glass or Speculum, conceive the Eye to be any where placed.

E B F O P Q A

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The Question now is, where the Point A ought to appear? Experience shews that it doth not appear behind at the Point Z, and it were contrary to Nature that it should; since all the Impression which affects the Sense comes from towards A. But from our Tenets it should seem to follow that it would appear before the Eye at a vast Distance off, so great as should in some Sort surpass all sensible Distance. For since

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if we exclude all Anticipations and Prejudices, every Object appears by fo much the farther off, by how much the Rays it fends to the Eye are less diverging. And that Object is thought to be most remote, from which Palallel Rays proceed unto the Eye. would make one think, that Object should appear, at yet a greater Distance, which is feen by converging Rays. 'Moreover it may in general be asked concerning this Case, what it is that determines the apparent Place of the Point A, and maketh it to appear after a constant manner, sometimes nearer, at other times farther off? To which Doubt, I fee nothing that can be answered agreeable to the Principles we have laid down except only that the Point A ought always to appear extremely remote. But on the contrary, we are alfured by Experience that the Point A appears variously distant, according to the different Situations of the Eye between the Point B and Z. And that it doth never (if at all) feem farther off, than it would if it were beheld by the naked Eye, but on the contrary, it doth sometimes appear much nearer. Nay, it is even certain, that by how much the Rays falling on the Eye do more (o

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more converge, by fo much the nearer doth the Object feem to approach. For the Eye being placed close to the Point B, the Object A appears nearly in its 'own natural Place, if the Point B is taken in the Glass, or at the same Diflance, if in the Speculum. The Eye being brought back to O, the Object feems to draw near: and being come to P it beholds it still nearer. And fo on by little and little, till at length the Eye ' being placed somewhere, suppose at Q, the Object appearing extremely near, begins to vanish into mere Confusion. 'All which doth feem repugnant to our 'Principles, at least, not rightly to agree with them. Nor is our Tenet alone ' struck at by this Experiment, but like-' wife all others that ever came to my 'Knowledge are, every whit as much, 'endangered by it. The ancient one ' especially (which is most commonly re-'ceived, and comes nearest to mine) ' feems to be fo effectually overthrown ' thereby, that the most learned Tacquet ' has been forced to reject that Principle, ' as false and uncertain, on which alone he ' had built almost his whole Catoptrics; 'and confequently by taking away the ' Foundation, hath himself pulled down the Superstructure he had raised on it. ' Which Which, nevertheless, I do not believe he would have done, had he but confidered the whole Matter more thoroughly, and ' examined the Difficulty to the Bottom. But as for me, neither this, nor any other Difficulty shall have so great an Influence on me, as to make me renounce that which I know to be ma-' nifestly agreeable to Reason: Especially when, as it here falls out, the Difficulty is founded in the peculiar Nature of a certain odd and particular Case. For in the present Case something peculiar lies ' hid, which being involved in the Subtilty of Nature will, perhaps, hardly be discovered till such time, as the · Manner of Vision is more perfectly made known. Concerning which, I must own, I have hitherto been able to find out nothing that has the least ' shew of Probability, not to mention · Certainty. I shall, therefore, leave this Knot to be untied by you, wishing you may have better Success in it than I have had.

XXX. The ancient and received Principle, which Dr. Barrow here mentions as the main Foundation of Tacquet's Catoptrics, is that every visible Point seen by Reflexion from a Speculum, shall appear placed

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placed at the Intersection of the restected Ray, and the Perpendicular of Incidence. Which Intersection in the present Case, happening to be behind the Eye, it greatly shakes the Authority of that Principle, whereon the aforementioned Author proceeds throughout his whole Catoptrics, in determining the apparent Place of Objects seen by Reslexion from any kind of Speculum.

XXXI. Let us now fee how this Phænomenon agrees with our Tenets. Eye the nearer it is placed to the Point B in the foregoing Figures, the more distinct is the Appearance of the Object; but as it recedes to O, the Appearance grows more confused; and at P it fees the Object yet more confused; and so on till the Eye being brought back to Z, fees the Object in the greatest Confusion of all. Wherefore by Sect. XXI. the Object should seem to approach the Eye gradually, as it recedes from the Point B, that is at O it should (in Consequence of the Principle I have laid down in the aforesaid Section) seem nearer than it did at B, and at P nearer than at O, and at Q nearer than at P; and fo on, till it quite vanishes at Z. Which is the very matter of Fact, as any one that

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XXXII. This Case is much the same, as if we should suppose an Englishman to meet a Foreigner, who used the same Words with the English, but in a direct contrary Signification. The Eng. lishman would not fail to make a wrong Judgment, of the Ideas annexed to those Sounds, in the Mind of him that used them. Just so, in the present Case the Object speaks (if I may so say) with Words that the Eye is well acquainted with, that is, Confusions of Appearance; but whereas heretofore the greater Confusions were always wont to fignify nearer Distances, they have in this Case a direct, contrary Signification, being connected with the greater Distances. Whence it follows, that the Eye must unavoidably be mistaken, fince it will take the Confusions in the Sense it has been used to, which is directly opposed to the True.

XXXIII. This Phænomenon as it entirely subverts the Opinion of those, who will have us judge of Distance by Lines and Angles, on which Supposition it is altogether inexplicable, so it seems to me is of the But of the of use of a mife well in D

then ceeding Power united Eye: before they I Vision

cent I framed Fig. 1. Eye, a fo as the exactly fall fer

Fig. 2.

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me no small Confirmation, of the Truth of that Principle whereby it is explained. But in order to a more full Explication of this Point, and to shew how far the Hypothesis of the Mind's judging by the various Divergency of Rays, may be of use in determining the apparent Place of an Object, it will be necessary to premise some sew things, which are already well known to those who have any Skill in Dioptrics.

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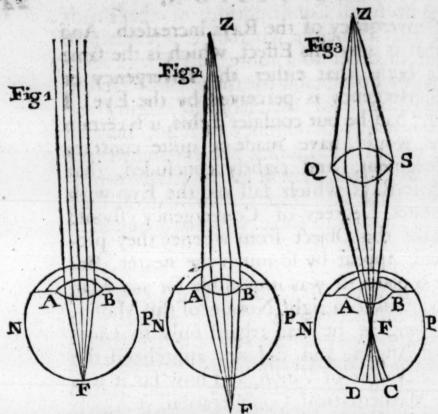
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XXXIV. First, Any radiating Point is then distinctly seen when the Rays proceeding from it are, by the Refractive Power of the Crystalline, accurately reunited in the Retina or Fund of the Eye: But if they are reunited, either before they arrive at the Retina, or after they have past it, then there is consused Vision.

XXXV. Secondly, Suppose in the adjacent Figures NP represent an Eye duly framed, and retaining its natural Figure. In Fig. 1. the Rays falling nearly Parallel on the Eye, are by the Crystalline AB refracted, so as their Focus or Point of Union F falls exactly on the Retina: But if the Rays fall sensibly diverging on the Eye, as in Fig. 2. then their Focus falls beyond the Retina:



Retina: Or if the Rays are made to converge by the Lens QS, before they come at the Eye, as in Fig. 3. their Focus F will fall before the Retina. In which two last Cases, it is evident from the foregoing Section, that the Appearance of the Point And by how much the Z is confused. greater is the Convergency, or Divergency of the Rays falling on the Pupil, by fo much the farther will the Point of their Reunion be from the Retina, either before or behind it, and consequently the Point Z will appear, by so much the more confused.

fused. us th faint the R Point recoll the R on: S becom This attend by rea or Gre Rays a This is

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fused. And this, by the bye, may shew us the Difference between confused, and faint Vision. Confused Vision is, when the Rays proceeding from each distinct Point of the Object are not accurately recollected in one corresponding Point on the Retina, but take up some Space thereon: So that Rays from different Points become mixed, and confused together. This is opposed to a distinct Vision, and attends near Objects. Faint Vision is, when by reason of the Distance of the Object or Groffness of the interjacent Medium few Rays arrive from the Object to the Eye. This is opposed to vigorous or clear Vision, and attends remote Objects. But to return.

the Mind perceiving only the Confusion it self, without ever considering the Cause from which it proceeds, doth constantly annex the same Degree of Distance to the same Degree of Confusion. Whether that Confusion be occasioned by converging, or by diverging Rays, it matters not. Whence it follows, that the Eye viewing the Object Z through the Glass QS (which by Refraction causeth the Rays ZQ, ZS, &c. to converge) should judge it to be at such a Nearness, at which if it were placed, it Vol II.

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would radiate on the Eye with Rays diverging to that Degree, as would produce the same Confusion, which is now produced by converging Rays, i.e. would cover a Portion of the Retina equal to DC. vid. Fig. 3. Supra. But then this must be understood (to use Dr. Barrow's Phrase) seclusis prænotionibus & præjudiciis, in case we abstract from all other Circumstances of Vision, such as the Figure, Size, Faintness, &c. of the visible Objects; all which do ordinarily concur to form our Idea of Distance, the Mind having by frequent Experience observed their several Sorts or Degrees, to be connected with various Distances.

XXXVII. It plainly follows from what hath been said, that a Person persectly Purblind (i. e. that could not see an Object distinctly, but when placed close to his Eye) would not make the same wrong Judgment that others do, in the forementioned Case. For, to him, greater Consusions constantly suggesting greater Distances, he must, as he recedes from the Glass, and the Object grows more Consused, judge it to be at a farther Distance, contrary to what they do, who have had the Perception of the Objects growing more

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XXXVIII. Hence also it doth appear, there may be good use of Computation by Lines and Angles in Optics; not that the Mind judgeth of Distance immediately by them, but because it judgeth by somewhat which is connected with them, and to the Determination whereof they may be fubservient. Thus the Mindjudging of the Distance of an Object, by the Confusedness of its Appearance, and this Confusedness being greater or lesser to the naked Eye, according as the Object is feen by Rays more or less diverging, it follows, that a Man may make use of the Divergency of the Rays in computing the apparent Distance, though not for its own fake, yet on account of the Confusion with which it is connected. But, so it is, the Confusion it felf is entirely neglected by Mathematicians, as having no necessary Relation with Distance, such as the greater or lesser Angles of Divergency are conceived to have. And these (especially for that they fall under Mathematical Computation) are alone regarded, in determining the apparent Places of Objects, as though they were the fole and immediate Caufe of the Judgments the Mind makes of Distance. Whereas, S 2

Whereas, in truth, they should not at all be regarded in themselves, or any otherwise, than as they are supposed to be the Cause of confused Vision.

XXXIX. The not confidering of this has been a fundamental and perplexing Overfight. For Proof whereof, we need go no farther than the Case before us. It having been observed, that the most diverging Rays brought into the Mind the Idea of nearest Distance, and that still, as the Divergency decreased, the Distance increased: and it being thought, the Connexion between the various Degrees of Divergency and Distance, was immediate; this naturally leads one to conclude, from an ill grounded Analogy, that converging Rays shall make an Object appear at an immense Distance: And that, as the Convergency increases, the Distance (if it were possible) should do so likewise. That this was the Cause of Dr. Barrow's Mistake, is evident from his own Words which we have quoted. Whereas had the learned Doctor observed, that diverging and converging Rays, how opposite soever they may feem, do neverthelessagree in producing the same Effect, to wit, Confusedness of Vifion, greater Degrees whereof are produced indifferently, either as the Divergency or Con-

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Convergency of the Rays increaseth. And that it is by this Effect, which is the same in both, that either the Divergency or Convergency is perceived by the Eye; I fay, had he but confider'd this, it is certain he would have made a quite contrary Judgment, and rightly concluded, that those Rays which fall on the Eye with greater Degrees of Convergency should make the Object from whence they proceed, appear by fo much the nearer. But it is plain, it was impossible for any Man to attain to a right Notion of this Matter, fo long as he had regard only to Lines and Angles, and did not apprehend the true Nature of Vision, and how far it was of Mathematical Confideration.

XL. Before we dismiss this Subject, it is fit we take notice of a Query relating thereto, proposed by the ingenious Mr. Molyneux, in his Treatise of Dioptrics *, where speaking of this Difficulty, he has these Words: 'And so he (i. e. Dr. Barrow) leaves this Difficulty to the Solution of others, which I (after so great an Example) shall do likewise; but with the Resolution of the same admirable Author of not quitting the evident Doctrine which we have

^{*} Par. I. Prop. 31. Sect. 9.

before laid down, for determining the Locus Objecti, on account of being pres'd by one Difficulty, which feems inexplicable till a more intimate Knowledge of the Visive Faculty be obtained by Mortals. In the mean time, I propose it to the Confideration of the Ingenious, Whether the Locus Apparens of an Object placed as in this 9th Section, be not as much before the Eye, as the distinct Base is behind the Eye?' To which Query we may venture to answer in the Negative. For in the present Case, the Rule for determining the Distance of the distinct Base, or respective Focus from the Glass is this: As the Difference between the Distance of the Object and Focus is to the Focus or Focal Length, so the Distance of the Object from the Glass is to the Distance of the respective Focus or distinct Base from the Glass *. Let us now suppose the Object to be placed at the Distance of the Focal Length, and one half of the Focal Length from the Glass, and the Eye close to the Glass, hence it will follow by the Rule, that the Distance of the distinct Base behind the Eye is double the true Distance of the Object before the Eye. If therefore Mr. Molyneux's Conjecture held good, it wou'd follow that the Eye

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it really is; and in other Cases at three or four times its due Distance, or more. But this manifestly contradicts Experience, the Object never appearing, at sarthest, beyond its due Distance. What ever therefore is built on this Supposition (vid. Corol. 1. Prop. 57, ibid.) comes to the Ground along with it.

XLI. From what hath been premis'd, it is a manifest Consequence, that a Man born blind, being made to fee, would, at first, have no Idea of Distance by Sight; The Sun and Stars, the remotest Objects as well as the nearer would all feem to be in his Eye, or rather in his Mind. The Objects intromitted by Sight, would feem to him (as in truth they are) no other than a new Set of Thoughts or Sensations, each whereof is as near to him, as the Perceptions of Pain or Pleasure, or the most inward Passions of his Soul. For our judging Objects perceiv'd by Sight to be at any Distance, or without the Mind, is (vid. SECT. XXVIII.) intirely the Effect of Experience, which one in those Circumstances could not yet have attained to.

XLII. It is indeed otherwise upon the common Supposition, that Men judge of Distance by the Angle of the Optic Axes,

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by the Angle comprehended by two Sticks, one whereof he held in each Hand. For if this were true, it would follow that one blind from his Birth being made to see, should stand in need of no new Experience, in order to perceive Distance by Sight. But that this is false, has, I think, been sufficiently demonstrated.

XLIII. And perhaps upon a strict Inquiry, we shall not find that even those, who from their Birth have grown up in a continu'd Habit of Seeing, are irrecoverably prejudiced on the other fide, to wit, in thinking what they fee to be at a Distance from them. For at this time it feems agreed on all hands, by those who have had any Thoughts of that Matter, that Colours, which are the proper and immediate Object of Sight, are not without the Mind. But then it will be faid, by Sight we have also the Ideas of Extenfion, and Figure, and Motion; all which may well be thought without, and at some Distance from the Mind, though Colour should not. In answer to this, I appeal to any Man's Experience, whether the vifible Extension of any Object doth not appear as near to him, as the Colour of that Object; Nay, whether they do not both feem feen the possified fepar fion furel too.

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both feem feem to be in the very same Place. Is not the Extension we see coloured, and is it possible for us, so much as in Thought, to separate and abstract Colour from Extension? Now, where the Extension is, there surely is the Figure, and there the Motion too. I speak of those which are perceived by Sight.

XLIV. But for a fuller Explication of this Point, and to shew that the immediate Objects of Sight are not so much as the Ideas or Resemblances of things placed at a Distance, it is requisite that we look nearer into the Matter, and carefully observe what is meant in common Discourse, when one fays, that which he fees is at a Distance from him. Suppose, for Example, that looking at the Moon I should fay it were fifty or fixty Semidiameters of the Earth distant from me. Let us see what Moon this is spoken of: It is plain it cannot be the visible Moon, or any thing like the visible Moon, or that which I see, which is only a round, luminous Plain, of about thirty visible Points in Diameter. For in case I am carried from the Place where I stand directly towards the Moon, it is manifest the Object varies, still as I go on; and by the time that I am advanced fifty or fixty Semidiameters of the

Earth, I shall be so far from being near a small, round, luminous Flat, that I shall perceive nothing like it; this Object having long fince disappeared, and if I would recover it, it must be by going back to the Earth from whence I fet out. Again, suppose I perceive by Sight the faint and obscure Idea of something, which I doubt whether it be a Man, or a Tree, or a Tower, but judge it to be at the Distance of about a Mile. It is plain I cannot mean, that what I see is a Mile off, or that it is the Image or Likeness of any thing which is a Mile off, fince that every Step I take towards it, the Appearance alters, and from being obscure, small, and faint, grows clear, large, and vigorous. And when I come to the Mile's end, that which I saw first is quite lost, neither do I find any thing in the likeness of it.

XLV. In these and the like Instances, the Truth of the Matter stands thus: Having of a long time experienced certain Ideas, perceivable by Touch, as Distance, tangible Figure, and Solidity, to have been connected with certain Ideas of Sight, I do upon perceiving these Ideas of Sight, forthwith conclude what Tangible Ideas are, by the wonted ordinary course of Nature, like to follow. Looking at an Object I

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perceive a certain visible Figure and Colour, with some degree of Faintness and other Circumstances, which from what I have formerly observed, determine me to think, that if I advance forward so many Paces or Miles, I shall be affected with fuch and fuch Ideas of Touch: So that in truth and strictness of Speech, I neither fee Distance it felf, nor any thing that I take to be at a Distance. I say, neither Distance, nor things placed at a Distance are themselves, or their Ideas, truly perceived by Sight. This I am persuaded of, as to what concerns my felf: and I believe whoever will look narrowly into his own Thoughts, and examine what he means by faying, he fees this or that thing at a Distance, will agree with me, that what he fees only fuggests to his Understanding, that after having passed a certain Distance, to be measured by the Motion of his Body, which is perceivable by Touch, he shall come to perceive such and such tangible Ideas which have been usually connected with fuch and fuch visible Ideas. But that one might be deceived by these Suggestions of Sense, and that there is no necessary Connexion between visible and tangible Ideas fuggested by them, we need go no farther than the next Lookingglass or Picture to be convinced. Note,

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that when I speak of Tangible Ideas, I take the word Idea for any the immediate Object of Sense, or Understanding, in which large Signification it is commonly used by the Moderns.

XLVI. From what we have shewn it is a manifest Consequence, that the Ideas of Space, Outness, and Things placed at a Distance, are not, strictly speaking, the Object of Sight; they are not otherwise perceived by the Eye than by the Ear. Sitting in my Study I hear a Coach drive along the Street; I look through the Casement and see it; I walk out and enter into it; thus, common Speech would incline one to think, I heard, faw, and touch'd the fame thing, to wit, the Coach. It is nevertheless certain, the Ideas intromitted by each Sense are widely different, and distinct from each other; but having been observed constantly to go together, they are spoken of as one and the same thing. By the Variation of the Noise I perceive the different Distances of the Coach, and know that it approaches before I look out. Thus by the Ear I perceive Distance, just after the same manner as I do by the Eye.

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XLVII. I do not nevertheless say, I hear Distance in like manner as I say that I fee it, the Ideas perceived by Hearing not being so apt to be confounded with the Ideas of Touch, as those of Sight are. So likewise a Man is easily convinced that Bodies and external Things are not properly the Object of Hearing; but only Sounds, by the Mediation whereof the Idea of this or that Body, or Distance is suggested to his Thoughts. But then one is with more Difficulty brought to discern the Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch: Though it be certain, a Man no more fees and feels the fame thing, than he hears and feels the fame thing.

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XLVIII. One Reason of which seems to be this. It is thought a great Absurdity to imagine, that one and the same thing should have any more than one Extension, and one Figure. But the Extension and Figure of a Body, being let into the Mind two ways, and that indifferently, either by Sight or Touch, it seems to follow that we see the same Extension and the same Figure which we feel.

XLIX. But if we take a close and accurate View of Things, it must be acknow-

knowledged that we never fee and feel one That which is feen and the same Object. is one thing, and that which is felt is another. If the visible Figure and Extension be not the fame with the tangible Figure and Extension, we are not to infer that one and the fame thing has divers Exten-The true Consequence is, that the Objects of Sight and Touch are two distinct things. It may perhaps require fome Thought rightly to conceive this Distinction. And the Difficulty seems not a little increased, because the Combination of Visible Ideas hath constantly the same Name, as the Combination of Tangible Ideas wherewith it is connected: Which doth of Necessity arise from the use and end of Language.

L. In order therefore to treat accurately and unconfusedly of Vision, we must bear in mind, that there are two Sorts of Objects apprehended by the Eye, the one primarily and immediately, the other secondarily and by Intervention of the former. Those of the first fort neither are, nor appear to be without the Mind, or at any Distance off: they may indeed grow greater, or smaller, more confused, or more clear, or more faint, but they do not, cannot approach or recede from us. Whenever

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we say an Object is at a Distance, whenever we say it draws near, or goes farther off, we must always mean it of the latter fort, which properly belong to the Touch, and are not so truly perceived, as suggested by the Eye in like manner as Thoughts by the Ear.

LI. No fooner do we hear the Words of a familiar Language pronounced in our Ears, but the Ideas corresponding thereto present themselves to our Minds: in the very fame Instant the Sound and the Meaning enter the Understanding: So closely are they united, that it is not in our Power to keep out the one, except we exclude the other also. We even act in all respects as if we heard the very Thoughts themselves. So likewise the secondary Objects, or those which are only suggested by Sight, do often more strongly affect us, and are more regarded than the proper Objects of that Sense; along with which they enter into the Mind, and with which they have afar more strict Connexion, than Ideas have with Words. Hence it is, we find it so difficult to discriminate between the immediate and mediate Objects of Sight, and are so prone to attribute to the former, what belongs only to the latter. They are, as it were, most closely twisted, blended,

blended, and incorporated together. And the Prejudice is confirmed and riveted in our Thoughts by a long Tract of Time, by the use of Language, and want of Reflexion. However, I believe any one that shall attentively consider what we have already said, and shall say upon this Subject before we have done, (especially if he pursue it in his own Thoughts) may be able to deliver himself from that Prejudice. Sure I am it is worth some Attention, to whoever would understand the true Nature of Vision.

LII. I have now done with Distance, and proceed to shew how it is, that we perceive by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. It is the Opinion of some that we do it by Angles, or by Angles in conjunction with Distance: but neither Angles, nor Distance being perceivable by Sight, and the things we see being in truth at no Distance from us, it follows that as we have shewn Lines and Angles not to be the Medium, the Mind makes use of in apprehending the apparent Place, so neither are they the Medium whereby it apprehends the apparent Magnitude of Objects.

LIII. It is well known that the same Extension at a near Distance shall subtend

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tend a greater Angle, and at a farther Distance, a leffer Angle. And by this Principle (we are told) the Mind estimates the Magnitude of an Object comparing the Angle under which it is feen with its Distance, and thence inferring the Magnitude thereof. What inclines Men to this Mistake (beside the Humour of making one fee by Geometry) is, that the same Perceptions or Ideas which fuggest Distance, do also suggest Magnitude. But if we examine it, we shall find they suggest the latter, as immediately as the former. I fay, they do not first suggest Distance, and then leave it to the Judgment to use that as a Medium, whereby to collect the Magnitude; but they have as close, and immediate a Connexion with the Magnitude, as with the Distance; and fuggest Magnitude as independently of Distance, as they do Distance independently of Magnitude. All which will be evident to whoever confiders what hath been already faid, and what follows.

LIV. It hath been shewn, there are two forts of Objects apprehended by Sight; each whereof hath its distinct Magnitude, or Extension. The one, properly Tangible, i. e. to be perceived and measured by Touch, and not immediately falling Vol. II.

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under the Sense of Seeing: The other, properly and immediately visible, by Mediation of which the former is brought in view. Each of these Magnitudes are greater or lesser, according as they contain in them more or sewer Points, they being made up of Points or Minimums. For, whatever may be said of Extension in Abstract, it is certain sensible Extension is not infinitely Divisible. There is a Minimum Tangible, and a Minimum Visible, beyond which Sense cannot perceive. This every ones Experience will inform him.

LV. The Magnitude of the Object which exists without the Mind, and is at a Distance, continues always invariably the same: But the visible Object still changing as you approach to, or recede from the Tangible Object, it hath no fixed and determinate Greatness Whenever therefore, we speak of the Magnitude of any thing, for Instance a Tree or a House, we must mean the Tangible Magnitude, otherwise there can be nothing steady and free from Ambiguity spoken of it. But though the Tangible and Visible Magnitude in truth belong to two distinct Objects: I shall nevertheless (especially fince those Objects are called by the fame Name, and are observed to coexist)

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LVI. Now in order to discover by what means, the Magnitude of Tangible Objects is perceived by Sight; I need only reflect on what passes in my own Mind, and observe what those things be, which introduce the Ideas of greater or leffer into my Thoughts, when I look on any Object. And these I find to be, First, the Magnitude or Extension of the Visible Object, which being immediately perceived by Sight, is connected with that other which is Tangible, and placed at a Distance. Secondly, The Confusion or Di-And Thirdly, The Vigoroufstinctness. ness or Faintness of the aforesaid visible Appearance. Cæteris paribus, by how much the greater or lesser, the Visible Object is, by so much the greater or leffer, do I conclude the Tangible Object to be. But, be the Idea immediately perceived by Sight never so large, yet if it be withal confused, I judge the Magnitude of the thing to be but imall. If it be distinct and clear, I judge it greater. And if it be faint, I apprehend it to be yet greater. What is here meant, by Confusion and Faintness, hath been explained in Sect. XXXV. T 2 LVII. MoreLVII. Moreover the Judgments we make of Greatness do, in like manner as those of Distance, depend on the Disposition of the Eye, also on the Figure, Number, and Situation of Objects and other Circumstances that have been obferved to attend great or fmall Tangible Magnitudes. Thus, for Instance, the very fame Quantity of Vifible Extension, which in the Figure of a Tower, doth fuggest the Idea of great Magnitude, shall, in the Figure of a Man fuggest the Idea of much smaller Magnitude. That this is owing to the Experience we have had of the usual Bigness of a Tower and a Man, no one, I suppose, need be told.

LVIII. It is also evident, that Confusion or Faintness, have no more a necessary Connexion with little or great Magnitude, than they have with little or great Distance. As they suggest the latter, so they suggest the former to our Minds. And by Consequence, if it were not for Experience, we should no more judge a faint or confused Appearance to be connected with great or little Magnitude, than we should that it was connected with great or little Distance.

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LIX. Nor will it be found, that great or small visible Magnitude hath any necessary Relation to great or small Tangible Magnitude: So that the one may certainly be infer'd from the other. But, before we come to to the Proof of this, it is fit we confider the Difference there is betwixt the Extension and Figure which is the proper Object of Touch, and that other which is termed Visible; and how the former is principally, though not immediately taken notice of, when we look at any Object. This has been before mentioned, but we shall here inquire into the Cause thereof. We regard the Objects that environ us, in proportion as they are adapted to benefit or injure our own Bodies, and thereby produce in our Minds the Sensations of Pleasure or Pain. Now Bodies operating on our Organs, by an immediate Application, and the Hurt or Advantage arifing there-from, depending altogether on the Tangible, and not at all on the Visible, Qualities of any Object: This is a plain Reason, why those should be regarded by us much more than these: and for this End, the Visive Sense seems to have been bestowed on Animals, to wit, that by the Perception of Visible Ideas (which in themselves are not capable of affecting, or any wife altering the Frame

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Frame of their Bodies) they may be able to foresee (from the Experience they have had, what Tangible Ideas are connected with fuch, and fuch Visible Ideas) the Damage or Benefit which is like to enfue, upon the Application of their own Bodies to this or that Body which is at a Diffance. Which Forefight, how necesfary it is to the Preservation of an Animal, every ones Experience can inform him. Hence it is that, when we look at an Object, the Tangible Figure and Extension thereof are principally attended to; whilft there is small heed taken of the Visible Figure and Magnitude, which, though more immediately perceived, do less concern us, and are not fitted to produce any Alteration in our Bodies.

LX. That the matter of Fact is true, will be evident to any one, who confiders that a Man placed at ten Foot Distance, is thought as great, as if he were placed at the Distance only of five Foot: which is true, not with relation to the Visible, but Tangible Greatness of the Object: The Visible Magnitude being far greater, at one Station, than it is at the other.

LXI. Inches, Feet, &c. are settled, stated Lengths, whereby we measure Objects, and

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and estimate their Magnitude: we fay, for Example, an Object appears to be fix Inches or fix Foot long. Now, that this cannot be meant of visible Inches, &c. is evident, because a visible Inch is it self no constant, determinate Magnitude, and cannot therefore ferve to mark out, and determine the Magnitude of any other thing. Take an Inch mark'd upon a Ruler: view it, fuccessively, at the distance of Half a Foot, a Foot, a Foot and a Half, &c. from the Eye: at each of which, and at all the intermediate Distances, the Inch shall have a different visible Extension, i. e. there shall be more or fewer Points discerned in it. Now I ask which of all these various Extensions, is that stated, determinate one, that is agreed on, for a common Measure of other Magnitudes? No Reason can be asfigned, why we should pitch on one, more than another: And except there be fome invariable, determinate Extension fixed on to be marked by the Word Inch, it is plain, it can be used to little purpose: and to fay, a Thing contains this or that Number of Inches, thall imply no more than that it is extended, without bringing any particular Idea of that Extension into the Mind. Farther, an Inch and a Foot, from different Distances, shall T 4 both

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both exhibit the same visible Magnitude, and yet at the same time, you shall say, that one seems several times greater than the other. From all which it is manifest, that the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of Objects by Sight, are altogether in reference to their Tangible Extension. Whenever we say an Object of great, or small, of this or that determinate Measure, I say, it must be meant of the Tangible, and not the Visible Extension, which, though immediately perceived, is nevertheless little taken notice of.

LXII. Now, that there is no necessary Connexion, between these two distinct Extensions is evident from hence: Because our Eyes might have been framed in fuch a manner, as to be able to fee nothing but what were less than the Minimum Tangibile. In which Case, it is not impossible we might have perceived all the immediate Objects of Sight, the very fame that we do now: But unto those visible Appearances, there would not be connected those different Tangible Magnitudes, that Which shews, the Judgments are now. we make of the Magnitude of Things placed at a distance, from the various Greatness of the immediate Objects of Sight, do not arise from any essential or necessary whic

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LXIV. Moreover, it is not only certain, that any Idea of Sight might not have been connected with this or that Idea of Touch, which we now observe to accompany it: But also, that the greater visible Magnitudes might have been connected with, and introduced into our Minds leffer Tangible Magnitudes, and the leffer Vifible Magnitudes greater Tangible Magni-Nay, that it actually is fo, we tudes. have daily Experience; that Object which makes a strong and large Appearance, not feeming near fo great as another, the Vifible Magnitude whereof is much less, but more faint, and the Appearance upper, or which is the same thing painted lower on the Retina, which Faintness and Situation fuggest both greater Magnitude and greater Distance.

LXIV. From which, and from Sect. LVII. and LVIII. it is manifest, that as we do not perceive the Magnitudes of Objects immediately by Sight, so neither do we perceive them, by the Mediation of any thing which has a necessary Connexion with them. Those Ideas that now suggest unto us the various Magnitudes

tudes of external Objects, before we touch them, might possibly have suggested no such thing: Or they might have signified them, in a direct contrary manner: so that the very same Ideas, on the Perception whereof we judge an Object to be small, might as well have served to make us conclude it great. Those Ideas being in their own Nature equally sitted to bring into our Minds the Idea of Small or Great, or no Size at all of outward Objects; just as the Words of any Language are in their own Nature indifferent to signify this or that thing, or nothing at all.

LXV. As we see Distance, so we see Magnitude. And we see both, in the same way that we see Shame or Anger in the Looks of a Man. Those Passions are themselves invisible, they are nevertheless let in by the Eye along with Colours and Alterations of Countenance, which are the immediate Object of Vision: And which signify them for no other Reason, than barely because they have been observed to accompany them. Without which Experience, we should no more have taken Blushing for a Sign of Shame, than of Gladness.

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LXVI. We are nevertheless exceeding prone to imagine those things, which are perceived only by the Mediation of others, to be themselves the immediate Objects of Sight; or, at least, to have in their own Nature a Fitness to be suggested by them, before ever they had been experienced to coexist with them. From which Prejudice every one, perhaps, will not find it easy to emancipate himself, by any the clearest Convictions of Reason. And there are some Grounds to think, that if there was one only invariable and universal Language in the World, and that Men were born with the Faculty of speaking it, it would be the Opinion of many, that the Ideas of other Mens Minds were properly perceived by the Ear, or had at least a necessary and inseparable Tye with the Sounds that were affixed to them. All which feems to arise from want of a due Application of our discerning Faculty, thereby to discriminate between the Ideas that are in our Understandings, and confider them apart from each other; which would preserve us from confounding those that are different, and make us fee what Ideas do, and what do not include or imply this or that other Idea.

LXVII. There

menon, the Solution whereof I shall attempt to give, by the Principles that have been laid down, in reference to the manner wherein we apprehend by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. The apparent Magnitude of the Moon when placed in the Horizon, is much greater than when it is in the Meridian. Though the Angle under which the Diameter of the Moon is seen, be not observed greater in the former Case, than in the latter: And the horizontal Moon doth not constantly appear of the same Bigness, but at some times seemeth far greater than at others.

LXVIII. Now in order to explain the Reason of the Moon's appearing greater than ordinary in the Horizon, it must be observed, that the Particles which compose our Atmosphere intercept the Rays of Light proceeding from any Object to the Eye; and by how much the greater is the Portion of Atmosphere, interjacent between the Object and the Eye, by fo much the more are the Rays intercepted; and by consequence, the Appearance of the Object rendered more faint, every Object appearing more vigorous or more faint, in Proportion as it sendeth more or fewer Rays into the Eye. Now, between the

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the Eye and the Moon, when fituated in the Horizon, there lies a far greater Quantity of Atmosphere, than there does when the Moon is in the Meridian. Whence it comes to pass, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is fainter, and therefore by Sect. LVI. it should be thought bigger in that Situation, than in the Meridian, or in any other Elevation above the Horizon.

LXIX. Farther, the Air being variously impregnated, sometimes more and sometimes less, with Vapours and Exhalations sitted to retund and intercept the Rays of Light, it follows, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon hath not always an equal Faintness, and by Consequence, that Luminary, though in the very same situation, is at one time judged greater than at another.

LXX. That we have here given the true Account of the Phænomena of the Horizontal Moon, will, I suppose, be farther evident to any one from the following Considerations. First, It is plain, that which in this Case suggests the Idea of greater Magnitude, must be something which is it self perceived; for, that which

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is unperceived cannot suggest to our Perception any other thing. Secondly, It must be fomething that does not constantly remain the fame, but is subject to some Change or Variation, fince the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon varies, being at one time greater than at another. And yet, Thirdly, It cannot be the visible Figure or Magnitude, fince that remains the fame, or is rather leffer, by how much the Moon is nearer to the Horizon. It remains therefore, that the true Cause is that Affection or Alteration of the Vifible Appearance, which proceeds from the greater Paucity of Rays arriving at the Eye, and which I term Faintness: Since this answers all the forementioned Conditions, and I am not conscious of any other Perception that doth.

LXXI. Add to this, that in mifty Weather it is a common Observation, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is far larger than usual, which greatly conspires with, and strengthens our Opinion. Neither would it prove in the least, irreconcilable with what we have said, if the Horizontal Moon should change sometimes to seem enlarged beyond its usual Extent, even in more serene Weather. For we must

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must not only have regard to the Mist, which happens to be in the place where we stand; we ought also to take into our Thoughts, the whole Sum of Vapours and Exhalations, which lie betwixt the Eve and the Moon: All which cooperating to render the Appearance of the Moon more faint, and thereby increase its Magnitude, it may chance to appear greater than it usually does, even in the Horizontal Position, at a time when, though there be no extraordinary Fog or Haziness, just in the place where we stand; yet, the Air between the Eye and the Moon, taken all together, may be loaded with a greater quantity of interspersed Vapours and Exhalations, than at other times.

LXXII. It may be objected, that in Consequence of our Principles, the Interposition of a Body in some degree Opaque, which may intercept a great Part of the Rays of Light, should render the Appearance of the Moon in the Meridian as large, as when it is viewed in the Horizon. To which I answer, it is not Faintness any how applied, that suggests greater Magnitude, there being no necessary, but only an experimental Connexion between those two things: It follows, that the

Faintness, which enlarges the Appearance, must be applied in such Sort, and with fuch Circumstances, as have been observed to attend the Vision of great Magnitudes. When from a Distance we behold great Objects, the Particles of the intermediate Air and Vapours, which are themselves unperceivable, do interrupt the Rays of Light, and thereby render the Appearance less strong and vivid: now, Faintness of Appearance caused in this Sort, hath been experienced to coexist with great Magnitude. But when it is caused by the Interposition of an opaque sensible Body, this Circumstance alters the Case, so that a faint Appearance this way caused, doth not suggest greater Magnitude, because it hath not been experienced to coexist with it.

LXXIII. Faintness, as well as all other Ideas or Perceptions which suggest Magnitude or Distance, doth it in the same way that Words suggest the Notions to which they are annexed. Now, it is known, a Word pronounced with certain Circumstances, or in a certain Context with other Words, hath not always the same Import and Signification, that it hath when pronounced in some other Circumstances, or different Context of Words. The very same Visible

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Visible Appearance as to Faintness and all other Respects, if placed on high, shall not fuggest the same Magnitude that it would if it were feen at an equal Distance, The Reason on a level with the Eye. whereof is, that we are rarely accustomed to view Objects at a great Height; our Concerns lie among things fituated rather before than above us; and accordingly our Eyes are not placed on the top of our Heads, but in fuch a Position, as is most convenient for us to see distant Objects standing in our way. And this Situation of them being a Circumstance, which usually attends the Vision of distant Objects, we may from hence account for (what is commonly observed) an Object's appearing of different Magnitude, even with respect to its Horizontal Extension, on the top of a Steeple, for example, an hundred Feet high to one standing below, from what it would if placed at an hundred Feet distance on a level with his Eye. For it hath been shewn, that the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of a thing, depends not on the visible Appearance alone, but also on diverse other Circumstances, any one of which being omitted or varied may fuffice to make some Alteration in our Judgment. Hence, VOL II.

the Circumstance of viewing a distant Object in such a Situation as is usual, and fuits with the ordinary Posture of the Head and Eyes being omitted, and instead thereof a different Situation of the Object, which requires a different Posture of the Head taking place, it is not to be wondered at, if the Magnitude be judged different: but it will be demanded, why an high Object should constantly appear less than an equidistant low Object of the fame Dimensions, for so it is observed to be: it may indeed be granted that the Variation of some Circumstances may vary the Judgment, made on the Magnitude of high Objects, which we are less used to look at: But it does not hence appear, why they should be judged less rather than greater? I answer, that in case the Magnitude of distant Objects was suggested by the Extent of their visible Appearance alone, and thought proportional thereto, it is certain they would then be judged much less than now they seem to be, Vide SECT. LXXIX. But, several Circumstances concurring to form the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of distant Objects, by means of which they appear far larger than others, whose vifible Appearance hath an equal or even greater

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greater Extension; it follows, that upon the Change or Omiffion of any of those Circumstances, which are wont to attend the Vision of distant Objects, and so come to influence the Judgments made on their Magnitude, they shall proportionably appear less than otherwise they would. For any of those things that caused an Object to be thought greater, than in proportion to its visible Extension, being either omitted or applied without the usual Circumstances, the Judgment depends more intirely on the visible Extension, and consequently the Object must be judged less. Thus in the present Case, the Situation of the thing feen being different from what it usually is in those Objects we have occasion to view, and whose Magnitude we observe, it follows, that the very same Object, being an hundred Feet high, should seem less than if it was an hundred Feet off on (or nearly on) a level with the Eye. What has been here fet forth, feems to me to have no small share in contributing to magnify the Appearance of the horizontal Moon, and deserves not to be passed over in the Explication of it.

LXXIV. If we attentively confider the Phænomenon before us, we shall find the not discerning between the mediate and U 2 im-

immediate Objects of Sight, to be the chief Cause of the Difficulty that occurs in the Explication of it. The Magnitude of the visible Moon, or that which is the proper and immediate Object of Vision, is no greater when the Moon is in the Horizon, than when it is in the Meridian. comes it therefore, to feem greater in one Situation than the other? What is it can put this Cheat on the Understanding? It has no other Perception of the Moon, than what it gets by Sight: And that which is feen, is of the same Extent, I fay, the visible Appearance hath the same, or rather a less Magnitude when the Moon is viewed in the Horizontal, than when in the Meridional Position: And yet it is efteemed greater in the former than in the latter. Herein confifts the difficulty, which doth vanish and admit of a most easy Solution, if we confider that as the vifible Moon is not greater in the Horizon than in the Meridian, so neither is it thought to be fo. It hath been already shewn, that in any act of Vision, the visible Object abfolutely, or in it felf, is little taken notice of, the Mind still carrying its View from that to some tangible Ideas, which have been observed to be connected with it, and by that means come to be suggested by it. So that when a thing is faid to ap-

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appear great or fmall, or whatever Estimate be made of the Magnitude of any thing, this is meant not of the visible, but of the tangible Object. This duly confidered, it will be no hard matter to reconcile the feeming Contradiction there is, that the Moon should appear of a different Bigness, the visible Magnitude thereof remaining still the same. For by SECT. LVI. the very fame visible Extension, with a different Faintness, shall suggest a different tangible Extension. When therefore the horizontal Moon is faid to appear greater than the meridional Moon, this must be understood not of a greater vifible Extension, but of a greater tangible or real Extension, which by reason of the more than ordinary Faintness of the vifible Appearance, is suggested to the Mind along with it.

LXXV. Many Attempts have been made by Learned Men, to account for this Appearance. Gassendus, Descartes, Hobbes, and several others, have employed their Thoughts on that Subject; but how fruitless and unsatisfactory their Endeavours have been, is sufficiently shewn in The Philosophical Transactions*, where you may see their several Opinions at large U 2

^{*} Phil. Trans. Num. 187. p. 314.

fet forth and confuted, not without some Surprize at the gross Blunders that ingenious Men have been forced into, by endeavouring to reconcile this Appearance with the ordinary Principles of Optics. Since the Writing of which, there hath been published in the Transactions + another Paper relating to the fame Affair by the celebrated Dr. Wallis, wherein he attempts to account for that Phænomenon, which, though it feems not to contain any thing new, or different from what had been faid before by others, I shall nevertheless consider in this place.

LXXVI. His Opinion, in short, is this; We judge not of the Magnitude of an Object by the visual Angle alone, but by the visual Angle in conjunction with the Distance. Hence, though the Angle remain the same, or even become less, yet if withal the Distance seem to have been increased, the Object shall appear greater. one way whereby we estimate the Distance of any thing, is by the Number and Extent of the intermediate Objects: When therefore the Moon is feen in the Horizon, the Variety of Fields, Houses, &c. together with the large Prospect of the wide extended Land or Sea, that lies between the Eye and the utmost Limb ot

† Numb. 187. p. 323.

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of the Horizon, suggest unto the Mind the Idea of greater Distance, and consequently magnify the Appearance. And this, according to Dr. Wallis, is the true Account of the extraordinary Largeness attributed by the Mind to the horizontal Moon, at a time when the Angle subtended by its Diameter, is not one Jot greater than it used to be.

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LXXVII. With reference to this Opinion, not to repeat what hath been already faid concerning Distance, I shall only obferve, First, That if the Prospect of interjacent Objects be that which fuggests the Idea of farther Distance, and this Idea of farther Distance be the Cause that brings into the Mind the Idea of greater Magnitude, it should hence follow, that if one looked at the horizontal Moon from behind a Wall, it would appear no bigger than ordinary. For in that Case, the Wall interposing cuts off all that Prospect of Sea and Land, &c. which might otherwife increase the apparent Distance, and thereby the apparent Magnitude of the Moon. Nor will it suffice to say, the Memory doth even then fuggest all that Extent of Land, &c. which lies within the Horizon; which Suggestion occasions a U 4

fudden Judgment of Sense, that the Moon is farther off and larger than usual. For ask any Man, who from fuch a Station beholding the horizontal Moon, shall think her greater than usual, whether he hath at that time in his Mind any Idea of the intermediate Objects, or long Tract of Land that lies between his Eye and the extreme Edge of the Horizon? And whether it be that Idea which is the Cause of his making the aforementioned Judgment? He will, I suppose, reply in the Negative, and declare the horizontal Moon shall appear greater than the meridional, though he never thinks of all or any of those things that lie between him and it. Secondly, It feems impossible by this Hypothesis, to account for the Moon's appearing in the very same Situation, at one time greater than at another; which nevertheless has been shewn to be very agreeable to the Principles we have laid down, and receives a most easy and natural Explication from them. For the further clearing up of this Point, it is to be observed that what we immediately and properly see are only Lights and Colours in fundry Situations and Shades, and Degrees of Faintness and Clearness, Confusion and Distinctness. All which visible Objects are only in the Mind,

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nor do they fuggest ought external, whether Distance or Magnitude, otherwise than by habitual Connexion as Words do Things. We are also to remark, that, beside the Straining of the Eyes, and beside the vivid and faint, the distinct and confused Appearances (which bearing fome Proportion to Lines and Angles, have been substituted instead of them, in the foregoing Part of this Treatise) there are other means which fuggest both Distance and Magnitude; particularly, the Situation of visible Points, or Objects, as upper or lower; the one suggesting a farther Distance and greater Magnitude, the other a nearer Distance and leffer Magnitude: All which is an Effect only of Custom and Experience; there being really nothing intermediate in the Line of Distance, between the uppermost and lowermost, which are both Æquidiftant, or rather at no Distance from the Eye, as there is also nothing in Upper or Lower, which by necessary Connexion. should suggest greater or lesser Magnitude. Now, as these customary, experimental means of fuggesting Distance, do likewise fuggest Magnitude, so they suggest the one as immediately as the other. I fay, they do not (Vide SECT. LIII.) first Sugfuggest Distance, and then leave the Mind from thence to infer or compute Magnitude, but suggest Magnitude as immediately and directly as they suggest Distance.

LXXVIII. This Phænomenon of the horizontal Moon is a clear Instance of the infufficiency of Lines and Angles, for explaining the way wherein the Mind perceives, and estimates the Magnitude of outward Objects. There is nevertheless a Use of Computation by them, in order to determine the apparent Magnitude of things, fo far as they have a Connexion with, and are proportional to those other Ideas, or Perceptions which are the true and immediate Occasions that suggest to the Mind the apparent Magnitude of Things. But this in general may, I think, be observed concerning mathematical Computation in Optics: That it can never be very precise and exact, fince the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of external Things do often depend on several Circumstances, which are not proportionable to, or capable of being defined by Lines and Angles.

LXXIX.

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LXXIX. From what has been faid, we may fafely deduce this Consequence; to wit, that a Man born blind and made to fee, would, at first opening of his Eyes, make a very different Judgment of the Magnitude of Objects intromitted by them, from what others do. He would not confider the Ideas of Sight, with reference to, or as having any Connexion with the Ideas of Touch: His View of them being entirely terminated within themselves, he can no otherwise judge them great or fmall, than as they contain a greater or leffer Number of visible Points. Now, it being certain that any visible Point can cover or exclude from View, only one other visible Point, it follows, that whatever Object intercepts the View of another. hath an equal Number of visible Points with it; and consequently they shall both be thought by him to have the same Magnitude. Hence it is evident, one in those Circumstances would judge his Thumb, with which he might hide a Tower, or hinder its being feen, equal to that Tower, or his Hand, the Interposition whereof might conceal the Firmament from his View, equal to the Firmament: How great an Inequality foever there may, in our Apprehensions, seem to be betwixt those

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two things, because of the customary and close Connexion that has grown up in our Minds between the Objects of Sight and Touch; whereby the very different and distinct Ideas of those two Senses, are so blended and confounded together, as to be mistaken for one and the same thing; out of which Prejudice we cannot easily extricate our selves.

LXXX. For the better explaining the Nature of Vision, and setting the Manner wherein we perceive Magnitudes in a due Light, I shall proceed to make some Observations concerning Matters relating thereto, whereof the want of Reflexion, and duly separating between tangible and visible Ideas, is apt to create in us mistaken and confused Notions. And First, I shall observe that the Minimum Visibile is exactly equal in all Beings whatfoever, that are endowed with the vifive Facul-No exquisite Formation of the Eye, no peculiar Sharpness of Sight can make it less in one Creature than in another; for it not being distinguishable into Parts, nor in any wife confifting of them, it must necessarily be the same to all. For suppose it otherwise, and that the Minimum Visibile of a Mite, for Instance, be less the land former is incommunication.

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less than the Minimum Visibile of a Man: the latter therefore may by Detraction of some part be made equal to the former: It doth therefore consist of Parts, which is inconsistent with the Notion of a Minimum Visibile, or Point.

LXXXI. It will perhaps be objected that the Minimum Visibile of a Man doth really, and in it felf contain Parts whereby it surpasses that of a Mite, though they are not perceivable by the Man. To which I answer, the Minimum Visibile having (in like manner as all other the proper and immediate Objects of Sight) been shewn not to have any Existence without the Mind of him who fees it, it follows there cannot be any Part of it that is not actually perceived, and therefore visible. Now for any Object to contain feveral distinct visible Parts, and at the same time to be a Minimum Visibile, is a manifest Contradiction.

LXXXII. Of these visible Points we see at all times an equal Number. It is every whit as great when our View is contracted and bounded by near Objects, as when it is extended to larger and remoter. For it being impossible that one Minimum Visibile

Vifible should obscure, or keep out of Sight more than one other, it is a plain Consequence; that when my View is on all fides bounded by the Walls of my Study, I fee just as many visible Points as I could, in case that by the Removal of the Study-walls, and all other Obstructions, I had a full Prospect of the circumjacent Fields, Mountains, Sea, and open Firmament: for fo long as I am shut up within the Walls, by their Interposition, every Point of the external Objects is covered from my View: But each Point that is feen being able to cover or exclude from Sight, one only other corresponding Point, it follows, that whilst my Sight is confined to those narrow Walls, I see as many Points, or Minima Vifibilia, as I should were those Walls away, by looking on all the external Objects, whose Prospect is intercepted by them. Whenever therefore we are faid to have a greater Prospect at one time than another, this must be understood with relation, not to the proper and immediate, but the secondary and mediate Objects of Vision, which, as hath been shewn, properly belong to the Touch.

LXXXIII. The visive Faculty considered, with reference to its immediate Objects,

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jects, may be found to labour of two Defects, First, In respect of the Extent or Number of visible Points that are at once perceivable by it, which is narrow and limited to a certain Degree. It can take in at one View but a certain determinate Number of Minima Vifibilia, beyond which it cannot extend its Prospect. Secondly, Our Sight is defective in that its View is not only narrow, but also for the most part confused: of those things that we take in at one Prospect, we can see but a few at once clearly and unconfusedly: and the more we fix our Sight on any one Object, by fo much the darker and more indistinct shall the rest appear.

LXXXIV. Corresponding to these two Desects of Sight, we may imagine as many Persections, to wit, 1st. That of comprehending in one View a greater Number of visible Points. 2dly. Of being able to view them all equally and at once, with the utmost Clearness and Distinction. That those Persections are not actually in some Intelligences of a different Order and Capacity from ours, it is impossible for us to know.

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LXXXV.

LXXXV. In neither of those two ways, do Microscopes contribute to the Improvement of Sight; for when we look through a Microscope, we neither see more visible Points, nor are the collateral Points more distinct than when we look with the naked Eye, at Objects placed in a due Distance. A Microscope brings us as it were into a new World: It presents us with a new Scene of visible Objects, quite different from what we behold with the naked Eve. But herein confifts the most remarkable Difference, to wit, that whereas the Objects perceived by the Eye alone, have a certain Connexion with Tangible Objects, whereby we are taught to foresee what will enfue upon the Approach or Application of distant Objects to the Parts of our own Body, which much conduceth to its Preservation; there is not the like Conne cion between things Tangible and those visible Objects, that are perceived by help of a fine Microscope.

LXXXVI. Hence it is evident, that were our Eyes turned into the Nature of Microscopes, we should not be much benefited by the Change; we should be deprived of the forementioned Advantage we at present receive by the visive Faculty; and

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and have left us only the empty Amufement of Seeing, without any other Benefit arising from it. But in that Case, it will perhaps be faid, our Sight would be endued with a far greater Sharpness and Penetration than it now hath. is certain from what we have already shewn, that the Minimum Visibile is never greater or lesser, but in all Cases conflantly the fame: and in the Case of microscopical Eyes, I see only this Difference, to wit, that upon the ceasing of a certain observable Connexion betwixt the divers Perceptions of Sight and Touch, which before enabled us to regulate our Actions by the Eye, it would now be rendered utterly unserviceable to that Purpose.

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LXXXVII. Upon the whole, it seems that if we consider the Use and End of Sight, together with the present State and Circumstances of our Being, we shall not find any great Cause to complain of any Defect or Impersection in it, or easily conceive how it could be mended. With such admirable Wisdom is that Faculty contrived, both for the Pleasure and Convenience of Life.

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LXXXVIII. Having finished what I intended to fay, concerning the Distance and Magnitude of Objects, I come now to treat of the Manner, wherein the Mind perceives by Sight their Situation. Among the Difcoveries of the last Age, it is reputed none of the least, that the Manner of Vision hath been more clearly explained, than There is, at this ever it had been before. Day, no one Ignorant, that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the Retina, or Fund of the Eye. That we can fee nothing which is not fo painted: And that, according as the Picture is more distinct or confused, so also is the Perception we have of the Object: But then in this Explication of Vision, there occurs one mighty Difficulty. The Objects are painted in an inverted Order on the Bottom of the Eye: The upper part of any Object being painted on the lower part of the Eye, and the lower part of the Object on the upper part of the Eye: And so also as to Right and Left. Since therefore the Pictures are thus inverted, it is demanded how it comes to pass, that we see the Objects erect and in their natural Posture?

LXXXIX. In answer to this Difficulty, we are told, that the Mind perceiving an Im-

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Impulse of a Ray of Light, on the upper part of the Eye, considers this Ray as coming in a direct Line, from the lower part of the Object; and in like manner tracing the Ray that strikes on the lower part of the Eye, it is directed to the upper part of the Object. Thus in the adjacent Figure C the lower Point of the Object ABC is projected on c the upper part of the Eye. So likewise, the highest

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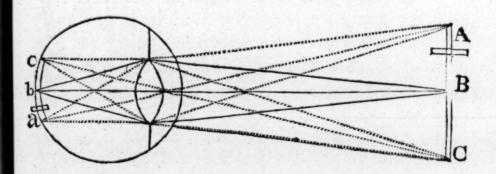
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Point A is projected on a the lowest part of the Eye, which makes the Representation c b a inverted: But the Mind confidering the Stroke that is made on c as coming in the stroke that is made on c as coming in the stroke that is made on c as coming in the Stroke or Impulse on a, as coming in the Line A a from the upper end of the Object, is directed to make a right Jugdment of the Situation of the Object ABC, notwithstanding the Picture of it is inverted. This is illustrated by conceiving a blind X 2 Man,

Man, who holding in his Hands two Sticks that cross each other, doth with them touch the Extremities of an Object, placed in a perpendicular Situation. It is certain, this Man will judge that to be the upper Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick held in the undermost Hand, and that to be the lower Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick in his uppermost Hand. This is the common Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects, which is generally received and acquiesced in, being (as Mr. Molyneux tells us *) allowed by all Men as Satisfactory.

XC. But this Account to me does not feem in any Degree true. Did I perceive those Impulses, Decussations, and Directions of the Rays of Light, in like manner as hath been set forth, then, indeed, it would not be altogether void of Probability. And there might be some Pretence for the Comparison of the Blind-Man and his cross Sticks. But the Case is far otherwise. I know very well that I perceive no fuch thing. And of Consequence, I cannot thereby make an Estimate of the Situation of Objects, I appeal to any one's Experience, whe-

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ther he be conscious to himself, that he thinks on the Intersection made by the radious Pencils, or pursues the Impulses they give in right Lines, whenever he perceives by Sight the Position of any Object? To me it seems evident, that croffing and tracing of the Rays, is never thought on by Children, Idiots, or in truth by any other, fave only those who have applied themselves to the Study of Optics. And for the Mind to judge of the Situation of Objects by those things, without perceiving them, or to perceive them without knowing it, is equally beyond my Comprehension. Add to this, that the explaining the manner of Vision by the Example of cross Sticks, and hunting for the Object along the Axes of the radious Pencils, doth suppose the proper Objects of Sight to be perceived at a Distance from us, contrary to what hath been demonstrated.

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XCI. It remains, therefore, that we look for some other Explication of this Difficulty: And I believe it not impossible to find one, provided we examine it to the Bottom, and carefully distinguish between the Ideas of Sight and Touch; which cannot be too oft inculcated in treating

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treating of Vision: But more especially throughout the Confideration of this Affair, we ought to carry that Distinction in our Thoughts: For that from want of a right Understanding thereof, the Difficulty of explaining erect Vision seems chiefly to arise.

XCII. In order to difentangle our Minds, from whatever Prejudices we may entertain with relation to the Subject in hand, nothing feems more apposite, than the taking into our Thoughts the Case of one born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to fee. And though perhaps, it may not be an easy Task to divest our selves intirely of the Experience received from Sight, so as to be able to put our Thoughts exactly in the Posture of fuch a one's; we must, nevertheless, as far as possible, endeavour to frame true Conceptions, of what might reasonably be supposed to pass in his Mind.

XCIII. It is certain, that a Man actually blind, and who had continued for from his Birth, would by the Sense of Feeling attain to have Ideas of Upper and Lower. By the Motion of his Hand he might discern the Situation of any tangible

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ble Object placed within his Reach. That Part on which he felt himself supported, or towards which he perceived his Body to gravitate, he would term lower, and the contrary to this upper; and accordingly denominate whatsoever Objects he touched.

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XCIV. But then, whatever Judgments he makes concerning the Situation of Objects, are confined to those only that are perceivable by Touch. All those things that are intangible, and of a spiritual Nature, his Thoughts and Defires, his Paffions, and in general all the Modifications of the Soul, to these he would never apply the Terms Upper and Lower, except only in a metaphorical Sense. He may, perhaps, by way of Allusion, speak of high or low Thoughts: But those Terms in their proper Signification, would never be applied to any thing, that was not conceived to exist without the Mind. For a Man born blind, and remaining in the fame State, could mean nothing else by the Words Higher and Lower, than a greater or leffer Distance from the Earth: Which Distance he would measure by the Motion or Application of his Hand, or some other part of his Body. It is, therefore, X 4 evident,

evident, that all those things which, in respect of each other, would by him be thought higher or lower, must be such as were conceived to exist without his Mind, in the ambient Space.

XCV. Whence it plainly follows, that fuch a one, if we suppose him made to fee, would not at first Sight think, that any thing he faw was high or low, erect or inverted; for it hath been already demonstrated in Sect XLI. that he would not think the Things he perceived by Sight to be at any Distance from him, or without his Mind. The Objects to which he had hitherto been used to apply the Terms Up and Down, High and Low, were fuch only as affected, or were fome way perceived by his Touch: But the proper Objects of Vision make a new Set of Ideas, perfectly distinct and different from the former, and which can in no fort make themselves perceived by Touch. There is, therefore, nothing at all that could induce him to think those Terms applicable to them: Nor would he ever think it, till such time as he had observed their Connexion with tangible Objects, and the fame Prejudice began to infinuate it self into his Understanding, which whi in t

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which from their Infancy had grown up in the Understandings of other Men.

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XCVI. To fet this Matter in a clearer Light, I shall make use of an Example. Suppose the above-mentioned blind Person, by his Touch, perceives a Man to stand Erect. Let us inquire into the manner of By the Application of his Hand to the feveral Parts of a humane Body, he had perceived different tangible Ideas, which being collected into fundry complex ones have distinct Names annexed to them. Thus one Combination of a certain tangible Figure, Bulk, and Confiftency of Parts is called the Head, another the Hand, a third the Foot, and fo of the rest: All which complex Ideas could, in his Understanding, be made up only of Ideas perceivable by Touch. He had also by his Touch obtained an Idea of Earth or Ground, towards which he perceives the Parts of his Body to have a natural Tendency. Now, by Erect nothing more being meant, than that perpendicular Position of a Man, wherein his Feet are nearest to the Earth: If the blind Person by moving his Hand, over the Parts of the Man who stands before him, perceives the tangible Ideas that compole compose the Head, to be farthest from. and those that compose the Feet to be nearest to, that other Combination of tangible Ideas which he calls Earth: He will denominate that Man Erect. But if we suppose him on a sudden to receive his Sight, and that he behold a Man standing before him, it is evident in that Case, he would neither judge the Man he fees to be Erect nor Inverted; for he never having known those Terms applied to any other, fave tangible Things, or which existed in the Space without him, and what he fees neither being Tangible, nor perceived as existing without, he could not know that in Propriety of Language they were applicable to it.

XCVII. Afterwards, when upon turning his Head or Eyes up and down to the right and left, he shall observe the visible Objects to change, and shall also attain to know, that they are called by the same Names, and connected with the Objects perceived by Touch; then, indeed, he will come to speak of them and their Situation, in the same Terms that he has been used to apply to tangible Things: And those that he perceives by turning up his Eyes, he will call Upper, and those that

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by turning down his Eyes, he will call Lower.

XCVIII. And this feems to me the true Reason, why he should think those Objects uppermost that are painted on the lower part of his Eye: For, by turning the Eye up they shall be distinctly seen; as likewise those that are painted on the highest part of the Eye shall be distinctly feen, by turning the Eye down, and are for that Reason esteemed lowest: For we have shewn that to the immediate Objects of Sight, confidered in themselves, he would not attribute the Terms High and Low. It must therefore be on account of fome Circumstances, which are observed to attend them: And these, it is plain, are the Actions of turning the Eye up and down, which fuggest a very obvious Reason, why the Mind should denominate the Objects of Sight accordingly High or Low. And without this Motion of the Eye, this turning it up and down in order to discern different Objects, doubtless Erect, Inverse, and other the like Terms relating to the Position of tangible Objects, would never have been transferred, or in any degree apprehended to belong to the Ideas of Sight: The meer Act

Act of Seeing including nothing in it to that Purpose; whereas the different Situations of the Eye naturally direct the Mind to make a suitable Judgment of the Situation of Objects intromitted by it.

XCIX. Farther, when he has by Experience learned the Connexion there is between the feveral Ideas of Sight and Touch, he will be able, by the Perception he has of the Situation of visible Things in respect of one another, to make a sudden and true Estimate of the Situation of outward, tangible Things corresponding to them. And thus it is, he shall perceive by Sight the Situation of External Objects, which do not properly fall under that Sense.

C. I know we are very prone to think, that if just made to see, we should judge of the Situation of visible Things as we do now: But, we are also as prone to think, that at first Sight, we should in the same way apprehend the Distance and Magnitude of Objects, as we do now: Which hath been shewn to be a false and groundless Persuasion. And for the like Reasons, the same Censure may be past on

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on the positive Assurance, that most Men, before they have thought sufficiently of the Matter, might have of their being able to determine by the Eye at first view, whether Objects were erect or inverse.

CI. It will, perhaps, be objected to our Opinion, that a Man, for instance. being thought erect when his Feet are next the Earth, and inverted when his Head is next the Earth, it doth hence follow, that by the meer Act of Vision, without any Experience or altering the Situation of the Eye, we should have determined whether he were erect or inverted: For both the Earth it felf, and the Limbs of the Man who stands thereon. being equally perceived by Sight, one cannot choose seeing, what part of the Man is nearest the Earth, and what part farthest from it, i. e. whether he be erect or inverted.

CII. To which I answer, the Ideas which constitute the tangible Earth and Man, are intirely different from those which constitute the visible Earth and Man. Nor was it possible, by virtue of the visive Faculty alone, without superadding

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any Experience of Touch, or altering the Position of the Eye, ever to have known, or so much as suspected, there had been any Relation or Connexion between them: Hence, a Man at first view would not denominate any thing he faw Earth, or Head, or Foot; and confequently, he could not tell by the meer Act of Vision, whether the Head or Feet were nearest the Earth: Nor, indeed, would we have thereby any thought of Earth or Man, erect or inverse, at all: Which will be made yet more evident, if we nicely observe, and make a particular Comparison between the Ideas of both Senses.

CIII. That which I see is only variety of Light and Colours. That which I seel is hard, or soft, hot or cold, rough or smooth. What Similitude, what Connexion have those Ideas with these? Or how is it possible, that any one should see Reason, to give one and the same Name to Combinations of Ideas so very different, before he had experienced their Coexistence? We do not find there is any necessary Connexion betwixt this or that tangible Quality, and any Colour whatsoever. And we may sometimes

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times perceive Colours, where there is nothing to be felt. All which doth make it manifest, that no Man at first receiving of his Sight, would know there was any Agreement between this or that particular Object of his Sight, and any Object of Touch he had been already acquainted with: The Colours therefore of the Head, would to him no more suggest the Idea of Head, than they would the Idea of Foot.

CIV. Farther, we have at large shewn (vid. Sect. LXIII and LXIV.) there is no discoverable, necessary Connexion, between any given visible Magnitude, and any one particular tangible Magnitude; but that it is intirely the refult of Custom and Experience, and depends on foreign and accidental Circumstances, that we can by the Perception of visible Extension inform our felves, what may be the Extenfion of any tangible Object connected with it. Hence it is certain that neither the visible Magnitude of Head or Foot, would bring along with them into the Mind, at first opening of the Eyes, the respective tangible Magnitudes of those Parts.

CV. By the foregoing Section, it is plain the visible Figure of any Part of the Body hath no necessary Connexion with the tangible Figure thereof, so as at first Sight to fuggest it to the Mind: For Figure is the Termination of Magnitude; whence it follows, that no visible Magnitude having in its own Nature an aptness to fuggest any one particular tangible Magnitude, so neither can any visible Figure be inseparably connected with its corresponding tangible Figure: So as of it felf and in a way prior to Experience, it might fuggest it to the Understanding. This will be farther evident, if we confider that what feems fmooth and round to the Touch, may to Sight, if viewed through a Microscope, seem quite otherwise.

CVI. From all which laid together and duly considered, we may clearly deduce this Inference. In the first Act of Vision, no Idea entering by the Eye, would have a perceivable Connexion with the Ideas to which the Names Earth, Man, Head, Foot, &c. were annexed in the Understanding of a Person blind from his Birth; so as in any sort to introduce them into his Mind, or make themselves be called by the same Names, and reputed the same Things

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Things with them, as afterwards they come to be.

CVII. There doth, nevertheless, remain one Difficulty, which perhaps may feem to press hard on our Opinion, and deserve not to be passed over: For though it be granted that neither the Colour, Size, nor Figure of the vifible Feet have any necessary Connexion with the Ideas that compose the tangible Feet, fo as to bring them at first fight into my Mind, or make me in danger of confounding them before I had been used to, and for some time experienced their Connexion: Yet thus much feems undeniable, namely, that the Number of the visible Feet, being the same with that of the tangible Feet, I may from hence without any Experience of Sight, reafonably conclude, that they represent or are connected with the Feet rather than the Head. I say, it seems the Idea of two visible Feet will sooner suggest to the Mind, the Idea of two tangible Feet than of one Head; so that the blind Man upon first Reception of the visive Faculty might know, which were the Feet or Two, and which the Head or One.

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CVIII. In order to get clear of this feeming Difficulty, we need only observe, that Diversity of visible Objects doth not necessarily infer diversity of tangible Objects corresponding to them. A Picture painted with great variety of Colours affects the Touch in one uniform manner; it is therefore evident, that I do not by any necessary Consecution, independent of Experience, judge of the number of things tangible, from the number of things vifible. I should not therefore at first opening my Eyes conclude, that because I fee two I shall feel two. How, therefore can I, before Experience teaches me, know that the visible Legs, because two, are connected with the tangible Legs, or the visible Head, because one is connected with the tangible Head? The truth is, the things I fee are so very different and heterogeneous from the things I feel, that the Perception of the one would never have fuggested the other to my thoughts, or enabled me to pass the least Judgment thereon, until I had experienced their Connexion.

CIX. But for a fuller Illustration of this Matter, it ought to be confidered that Number (however fome may reckon it amongst

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amongst the primary Qualities) is nothing fixed and fettled, really existing in things themselves. It is intirely the Creature of the Mind, confidering, either an Idea by it felf, or any Combination of Ideas to which it gives one Name, and so makes it pass According as the Mind for an Unite. variously combines its Ideas, the Unite varies: and as the Unite, so the Number, which is only a Collection of Unites, doth We call a Window one, a also vary. Chimney one, and yet a House in which there are many Windows, and many Chimneys, hath an equal right to be called one, and many Houses go to the making of one In these and the like Instances, it is evident the Unite constantly relates to the particular Draughts the Mind makes of its Ideas, to which it affixes Names, and wherein it includes more or less, as best fuits its own Ends and Purposes. Whatever therefore the Mind confiders as one, that is an Unite. Every Combination of Ideas is confidered as one thing by the mind, and in token thereof is marked by one Name. Now, this naming and combining together of Ideas is perfectly arbitrary, and done by the Mind in fuch fort, as Experience shews it to be most convenient: Without which, our Ideas had never

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never been collected into fuch fundry distinct Combinations as they now are.

CX. Hence it follows, that a Man born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to fee, would not in the first Act of Vision, parcel out the Ideas of Sight, into the same distinct Collections that others do, who have experienced which do regularly coexist and are proper to be bundled up together under one Name. He would not, for Example, make into one complex Idea, and thereby esteem an Unite all those particular Ideas, which constitute the visible Head or Foot. For there can be no Reason assigned why he should do fo, barely upon his feeing a Man stand upright before him: There croud into his Mind the Ideas which compose the visible Man, in company with all the other Ideas of Sight perceiv'd at the same time: But all these Ideas offered at once to his View, he would not distribute into fundry distinct Combinations, till fuch time as by observing the Motion of the Parts of the Man and other Experiences, he comes to know, which are to be separated, and which to be collected together.

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CXI. From what hath been premised, it is plain the Objects of Sight and Touch make, if I may so say, two Sets of Ideas, which are widely different from each other. To Objects of either kind, we indifferently attribute the Terms high and low, right and left, and fuch like, denoting the Pofition or Situation of things: But then we must well observe that the Position of any Object is determined with respect only to Objects of the same Sense. We say any Object of Touch is high or low, according as it is more or less distant from the tangible Earth: And in like manner we denominate any Object of Sight high or low, in Proportion as it is more or less distant from the visible Earth: But to define the Situation of visible Things, with relation to the Distance they bear from any tangible Thing, or vice versa, this were absurd and perfectly unintelligible. For all visible things are equally in the Mind, and take up no part of the external Space: And consequently are equidistant from any tangible thing, which exists without the Mind.

CXII. Or rather to speak truly, the proper Objects of Sight are at no Distance, neither near nor far, from any tangible Y 3 Thing.

A NEW THEORY

Thing. For if we inquire narrowly into the Matter we shall find that those things only are compared together in respect of Distance, which exist after the same manner, or appertain unto the same Sense. For by the Distance between any two Points, nothing more is meant than the Number of intermediate Points: If the given Points are visible, the Distance between them is marked out by the Number of the interjacent visible Points: If they are tangible, the Distance between them is a Line confisting of tangible Points; but if they are one tangible, and the other vifible, the Distance between them doth neither confift of Points perceivable by Sight nor by Touch, i. e. it is utterly incon-This, perhaps, will not find an ceivable. easy Admission into all Mens Understanding: However, I should gladly be informed whether it be not true, by any one who will be at the pains to reflect a little, and apply it home to his Thoughts.

CXIII. The not observing what has been delivered in the two last Sections, seems to have occasioned no small part of the Difficulty that occurs in the Business of erect Appearances. The Head, which

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is painted nearest the Earth, seems to be farthest from it: and on the other hand, the Feet, which are painted farthest from the Earth, are thought nearest to it. Herein lies the Difficulty, which vanishes if we express the thing more clearly and free from Ambiguity, thus: How comes it that, to the Eye, the visible Head which is nearest the tangible Earth, seems farthest from the Earth, and the visible Feet, which are farthest from the tangible Earth, seem nearest the Earth? The Question being thus proposed, who sees not, the Difficulty is founded on a Supposition, that the Eye, or visive Faculty, or rather the Soul by means thereof, should judge of the Situation of visible Objects, with reference to their Distance from the tangible Earth? Whereas it is evident the tangible Earth is not perceived by Sight: And it hath been shewn in the two last preceding Sections, that the Location of visible Objects is determined only by the Distance they bear from one another; and that it is Nonsense to talk of Distance, far or near, between a visible and tangible Thing.

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CXIV. If we confine our Thoughts to the proper Objects of Sight, the whole is Y 4 plain plain and easy. The Head is painted farthest from, and the Feet nearest to the visible Earth; and so they appear to be. What is there strange or unaccountable in this? Let us suppose the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, to be the immediate Objects of the Sight. The Consequence is, that things should appear in the same Posture they are painted in; and is it not so? The Head which is seen, seems farthest from the Earth which is seen; and the Feet, which are seen, seem nearest to the Earth which is seen; and just so they are painted.

CXV. But, fay you, the Picture of the Man is inverted, and yet the Appearance is erect: I ask, what mean you by the Picture of the Man, or, which is the same thing, the visible Man's being inverted? You tell me it is inverted, because the Heels are uppermost, and the Head undermost? Explain me this. You fay, that by the Head's being undermost, you mean that it is nearest to the Earth; and by the Heels being uppermost, that they are farthest from the Earth. I ask again, what Earth you mean? You cannot mean the Earth that is painted on the Eye, or the visible Earth: For the Picture of the Head is farthest

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farthest from the Picture of the Earth, and the Picture of the Feet nearest to the Picture of the Earth; and accordingly the visible Head is farthest from the visible Earth, and the visible Feet nearest to it. It remains, therefore, that you mean the tangible Earth, and so determine the Situation of visible things with respect to tangible things; contrary to what hath been demonstrated in Sect. CXI. and CXII. The two distinct Provinces of Sight and Touch should be considered apart, and as if their Objects had no Intercourse, no manner of Relation one to another, in point of Distance or Position.

CXVI. Farther, what greatly contributes to make us mistake in this Matter is, that when we think of the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, we imagine our felves looking on the Fund of another's Eye, or another looking on the Fund of our own Eye, and beholding the Pictures painted thereon. Suppose two Eyes A and B: A from some distance looking on the Pictures in B sees them inverted, and for that Reason concludes they are inverted in B: But this is There are projected in little on the Bottom of A, the Images of the Pictures of, suppose Man, Earth, &c. which are painted on B. And besides these, the Eye Eye B it felf, and the Objects which environ it, together with another Earth, are projected in a larger Size on A. Now, by the Eye A, these larger Images are deemed the true Objects, and the leffer only Pictures in miniature. And it is with respect to those greater Images, that it determines the Situation of the smaller Images: So that comparing the little Man with the great Earth, A judges him inverted, or that the Feet are farthest from, and the Head nearest to the great Earth. Whereas, if A compare the little Man with the little Earth, then he will appear erect, i.e. his Head shall seem farthest from, and his Feet nearest to the little Earth. But we must consider that B does not see two Earths as A does: It fees only what is represented by the little Pictures in A, and consequently shall judge the Man erect: For, in truth, the Man in B is not inverted, for there the Feet are next the Earth; but it is the Representation of it in A which is inverted, for there the Head of the Representation of the Picture of the Man in B is next the Earth, and the Feet farthest from the Earth, meaning the Earth which is without the Representation of the Pictures in B. For if you take the little Images of the Pictures in B, and confider them by themselves, and with respect only

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to one another, they are all Erect and in their natural Posture.

CXVII. Farther, there lies a Mistake in our imagining that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the Bottom of the Eye. It hath been shewn, there is no Resemblance between the Ideas of Sight and things Tangible. It hath likewife been demonstrated, that the proper Objects of Sight do not exist without the Mind. Whence it clearly follows, that the Pictures painted on the Bottom of the Eye, are not the Pictures of external Objects. Let any one confult his own Thoughts, and then fay what Affinity, what Likeness there is between that certain Variety and Disposition of Colours, which constitute the visible Man, or Picture of a Man, and that other Combination of far different Ideas, sensible by Touch, which compose the tangible Man. But if this be the Case, how come they to be accounted Pictures or Images, fince that supposes them to copy or represent some Originals or other?

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ly to CXVIII. To which I answer: In the forementioned Instance, the Eye A takes the little Images, included within the Representation

presentation of the other Eye B, to be Pictures or Copies, whereof the Archetypes are not things existing without, but the larger Pictures projected on its own Fund: and which by A are not thought Pictures, but the Originals, or true Things themselves. Though if we suppose a third Eye C, from a due Distance to behold the Fund of A, then indeed the Things projected thereon, shall, to C, seem Pictures or Images, in the same Sense that those projected on B do to A.

CXIX. Rightly to conceive this Point, we must carefully distinguish between the Ideas of Sight and Touch, between the visible and tangible Eye; for certainly on the tangible Eye, nothing either is or feems to be painted. Again, the visible Eye, as well as all other visible Objects, hath been shewn to exist only in the Mind, which perceiving its own Ideas, and comparing them together, calls some Pictures What hath been in respect of others. faid, being rightly comprehended and laid together, doth, I think, afford a full and genuine Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects; which Phænomenon, I must confess, I do not see how it can be explained by any Theories of Vision hitherto made publick.

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CXX. In treating of these things, the use of Language is apt to occasion some Obscurity and Confusion, and create in us wrong Ideas: For Language being accommodated to the common Notions and Prejudices of Men, it is scarce possible to deliver the naked and precise Truth, without great Circumlocution, Impropriety, and (to an unwary Reader) feeming Contradictions; I do, therefore, once for all defire whoever shall think it worth his while to understand what I have written concerning Vision, that he would not stick in this or that Phrase, or Manner of Expression, but candidly collect my Meaning from the whole Sum and Tenor of my Discourse, and laying aside the Words as much as possible, consider the bare Notions themselves, and then judge whether they are agreeable to Truth and his own Experience, or no.

CXXI. We have shewn the way wherein the Mind by mediation of visible Ideas
doth perceive or apprehend the Distance,
Magnitude, and Situation of tangible Objects. We come now to inquire more particularly concerning the Difference between
the Ideas of Sight and Touch, which are
called by the same Names, and see whe-

ther there be any Idea common to both From what we have at large fet forth and demonstrated in the foregoing Parts of this Treatise, it is plain there is no one self same numerical Extension, perceived both by Sight and Touch; but that the particular Figures and Extensions perceived by Sight, however they may be called by the same Names, and reputed the same Things, with those perceived by Touch, are nevertheless different, and have an Existence distinct and separate from them: So that the Question is not now concerning the same numerical Ideas, but whether there be any one and the fame fort or Species of Ideas equally perceivable to both Senses; Or, in other Words, whether Extension, Figure, and Motion perceived by Sight, are not specifically distinct from Extension, Figure, and Motion perceived by Touch.

CXXII. But before I come more particularly to discuss this Matter, I find it proper to confider Extension in Abstract: For of this there is much Talk, and I am apt to think, that when Men speak of Extension, as being an Idea common to two Senses, it is with a secret Supposition, that we can fingle out Exten-

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fion from all other tangible and visible Qualities, and form thereof an abstract Idea, which Idea they will have common both to Sight and Touch. We are therefore to understand by Extension in abstract, an Idea of Extension, for Instance, a Line or Surface, intirely stript of all other fenfible Qualities and Circumstances that might determine it to any particular Existence; it is neither black nor white, nor red, nor hath it any Colour at all, or any tangible Quality whatfoever, and confequently it is of no finite determinate Magnitude: For that which bounds or diftinguishes one Extension from another, is fome Quality or Circumstance wherein they disagree.

CXXIII. Now I do not find that I can perceive, imagine, or any wife frame in my Mind such an abstract Idea, as is here spoken of. A Line or Surface, which is neither black, nor white, nor blue, nor yellow, &c. nor long, nor short, nor rough, nor smooth, nor square, nor round, &c. is perfectly incomprehensible. This I am sure of as to my self: how far the Faculties of other Men may reach, they best can tell.

CXXIV.

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CXXIV. It is commonly faid, that the Object of Geometry is abstract Extension: but Geometry contemplates Figures: Now, Figure is the Termination of Magnitude: but we have shewn that Extension in Abstract hath no finite determinate Magnitude. Whence it clearly follows that it can have no Figure, and consequently is not the Object of Geometry. It is indeed a Tenet as well of the. modern as of the ancient Philosophers, that all general Truths are concerning universal abstract Ideas; without which, we are told, there could be no Science, no Demonstration of any general Proposition in Geometry. But it were no hard matter, did I think it necessary to my present Purpose, to shew that Propositions and Demonstrations in Geometry might be universal, though they who make them, never think of abstract general Ideas of Triangles or Circles.

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CXXV. After reiterated Endeavours to apprehend the general Idea of a Triangle, I have found it altogether incomprehensible. And furely if any one were able to introduce that Idea into my Mind, it must be the Author of the Essay concerning Humane Understanding; He, who has so far distin-

distinguished himself from the generality of Writers, by the Clearness and Significancy of what he fays. Let us therefore fee how this celebrated Author describes the general, or abstract Idea of a Triangle. 'It must be (says he) neither Ob-'lique, nor Rectangular, neither Equilateral, ' Equicrural, nor Scalenum; but all and none of these at once. In effect it is 'fomewhat imperfect that cannot exist; 'an Idea, wherein some Parts of several ' different and inconfistent Ideas are put 'together.' Essay on Hum. Understand. B. iv. C. 7. S. 9. This is the Idea, which he thinks needful, for the Enlargement of Knowledge, which is the Subject of Mathematical Demonstration, and without which we could never come to know any general Proposition concerning Triangles. That Author acknowledges it doth ' require fome Pains and Skill to form this 'general Idea of a Triangle.' Ibid. But had he called to mind what he fays in another Place, to wit, 'That Ideas of ' mixed Modes wherein any inconfiftent 'Ideas are put together, cannot so much as exist in the Mind, i.e. be conceived.' Vid. B. iii. C. 10. S. 33. Ibid. I fay, had this occurred to his Thoughts, it is not improbable he would have owned it above Vol. II. \mathbf{Z}

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all the Pains and Skill he was mafter of, to form the above-mentioned Idea of a Triangle, which is made up of manifest, staring Contradictions. That a Man who laid so great a Stress on clear and determinate Ideas, should nevertheless talk at this rate, feems very furprifing. But the Wonder will lessen if it be considered, that the Source whence this Opinion flows, is the prolific Womb which has brought forth innumerable Errors and Difficulties, in all parts of Philosophy, and in all the Sciences: But this Matter, taken in its full Extent, were a Subject too comprehensive to be insisted on in this -place. And so much for Extension in SAbstract. device the Manual of the

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Propension, to think the Ideas of Outof Sight; yet, if I mistake not, in the
foregoing Parts of this Essay, that hath
been clearly demonstrated to be a mere
Delusion, arising from the quick and sudden suggestion of Fancy, which so closely
connects the Idea of Distance with those

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of Sight, that we are apt to think it is it self a proper and immediate Object of that Sense, till Reason corrects the Mistake.

CXXVII. It having been shewn, that there are no abstract Ideas of Figure, and that it is impossible for us, by any Precision of Thought, to frame an Idea of Extension separate from all other visible and tangible Qualities, which shall be common both to Sight and Touch: The Question now remaining is, whether the particular Extensions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Sight be of the fame kind, with the particular Extensions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Touch? In answer to which, I shall venture to lay down the following Proposition: The Extension, Figures, and Motions, perceived by Sight are specifically distinct from the Ideas of Touch, called by the same Names, nor is there any such thing as one Idea, or kind of Idea common to both Senses. This Proposition may, without much Difficulty; be collected from what hath been said in several Places of this Effay. But, because it feems foremote from, and contrary to, the received Notions and fettled Opinion of Mankind, Z 2

kind, I shall attempt to demonstrate it more particularly, and at large, by the following Arguments.

of Touch: Not will at CXXVIII. When upon Perception of an Idea, I range it under this or that fort; it is because it is perceived after the same manner, or because it has a Likeness or Conformity with, or affects me in the fame way as the Ideas of the fort I rank it under. In short, it must not be intirely new, but have fomething in it old, and already perceived by me: It must, I say, have so much, at least, in common with. the Ideas I have before known and named, as to make me give it the same Name with them. But it has been, if I mistake not, clearly made out, that a Man born blind would not at first Reception of his Sight, think the Things he saw were of tl. ____ Nature with the Objects of Touch, or had any thing in common with them; but that they were a new Set of Ideas, perceived in a new Manner, and intirely different from all he had ever perceived before: So that he would not call them by the fame Name, nor repute them to be of the same Sort, with any thing he had hitherto known.

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CXXIX. Secondly, Light and Colours are allowed by all to constitute a fort or Species intirely different from the Ideas of Touch: Nor will any Man, I presume, say they can make themselves perceived by that Sense: But there is no other immediate Object of Sight, besides Light and Colours. It is therefore a direct Consequence, that there is no Idea common to both Senses.

CXXX. It is a prevailing Opinion, even amongst those who have thought and writ most accurately concerning our Ideas, and the ways whereby they enter into the Understanding, that something more is perceived by Sight, than barely Light and Colours with their Variations. Mr. Locke termeth Sight, 'The most comprehen-' five of all our Senses, conveying to our ' Minds the Ideas of Light and Colours, ' which are peculiar only to that Sense; ' and also the fair different Ideas of Space, ' Figure, and Motion.' Essay on Humane Understand. B. ii. C. 9. S. 9. Space or Distance, we have shewn is not otherwise the Object of Sight than of Hearing. vid. Sect. XLVI. And as for Figure and Extension, I leave it to any one, that shall calmly attend to his own clear and distinct Z 3 Ideas

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Ideas, to decide whether he has any Idea intromitted immediately and properly by Sight, fave only Light and Colours: Or whether it be possible for him, to frame in his Mind a distinct Abstract Idea of Visible Extension, or Figure, exclusive of all Colour: and on the other hand, whether he can conceive Colour without visible Extension? For my own part, I must confess, I am not able to attain so great a nicety of Abstraction: in a strict Sense, I see nothing but Light and Cofours, with their feveral Shades and Variations. He who beside these doth also perceive by Sight Ideas far different and distinct from them, hath that Faculty in a Degree more perfect and comprehensive than I can pretend to. It must be owned, that by the Mediation of Light and Co-Jours, other far different Ideas are suggested to my Mind: but so they are by Hearing, which befide Sounds which are peculiar to that Sense, doth by their Mediation fuggest nor only Space, Figure, and Motion, but also all other Ideas whatsoever that can be fignified by Words.

Axiom universally received, that Quantities of the same kind may be added together,

gether, and make one intire Sum. Mathematicians add Lines together: but they do not add a Line to a Solid, or conceive it as making one Sum with a Surface: There three kinds of Quantity being thought incapable of any fuch mutual Addition, and confequently of being compared together, in the feveral ways of Proportion, are by them esteemed intirely Disparate and Heterogeneous. Now let any one try in his Thoughts to add a visible Line or Surface to a tangible Line or Surface, fo as to conceive them making one continued Sum or Whole. He that can do this, may think them Homogeneous: but he that cannot must, by the foregoing Axiom, think them Heterogeneous: A Blue, and a Red Line I can conceive added together into one Sum, and making one continued Line: but to make, in my Thoughts, one continued Line of a visible and tangible Line added together is, I find, a Task far more difficult, and even insurmountable: and I leave it to the Reflexion and Experience of every particular Person to determine ever that can be fignified by Alalmid rol

OXXXII. A farther Confirmation of our Tenet may be drawn from the Solution

tion of Mr. Molyneux's Problem, published by Mr. Locke in his Effay: Which I shall fet down as it there lies, together with Mr. Locke's Opinion of it, 'Suppose a Man born Blind, and now Adult, and taught by his Touch to distinguish between a Cube, and a Sphere of the same Metal, and nighly of the same Bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and t'other, which is the Cube, and which the Sphere. Suppose then the Cube and Sthere placed on a Table, and the blind Man to be made to See: Quære, Whether by his Sight, before be touched them, he could now distinguish, and tell, which is the Globe, which ' the Cube? To which the acute and judieious Proposer answers: Not. For though be has obtained the Experience of, bow a Globe, how a Cube affects his Touch; yet ' he has not yet attained the Experience, that what affects his Touch so or so, must affect ' his Sight so or so: Or that a protuberant Angle in the Cube, that pressed his Hand unequally, shall appear to his Eye, as it doth in the Cube. I agree with this ' thinking Gentleman, whom I am proud ' to call my Friend, in his Answer to this ' his Problem; and am of opinion, that ' the blind Man, at first Sight would not be able with certainty to fay, which was ' the

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the Globe, which the Cube, whilst he only saw them.' Essay on Humane Understanding, B. ii. C. o. S. 8.

Mr. Locke Opinion of it. CXXXIII. Now, if a fquare Surface perceived by Touch be of the same fort with a square Surface perceived by Sight; it is certain the blind Man here mentioned might know a square Surface, as foon as he faw it: It is no more but introducing into his Mind, by a new Inlet, an Idea he has been already well acquainted with. Since therefore he is supposed to have known by his Touch, that a Cube is a Body terminated by square Surfaces; and that a Sphere is not terminated by fquare Surfaces: upon the supposition that a visible and tangible Square differ only in numero, it follows, that he might know, by the unerring Mark of the square Surfaces, which was the Cube, and which not, while he only faw them. We must therefore allow, either that visible Extenfion and Figures are specifically distinct from tangible Extension and Figures, or elfe, that the Solution of this Problem, given by those two thoughtful and ingenious Men, is wrong. blund Man, at mit Sight would not

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cxxxiv. Much more might be laid together in Proof of the Proposition I have advanced: but what has been said is, if I mistake not, sufficient to convince any one that shall yield a reasonable Attention: And, as for those that will not be at the pains of a little Thought, no Multiplication of Words will ever suffice to make them understand the Truth, or rightly conceive my Meaning.

CXXXV. I cannot let go the abovementioned Problem, without fome Reflexion on it. It hath been made evident, that a Man blind from his Birth would nor, at first Sight, denominate any thing he faw, by the Names he had been used to appropriate to Ideas of Touch, vid. Sect. CVI. Cube, Sphere, Table, are Words he has known applied to Things perceivable by Touch, but to Things perfectly intangible he never knew them applied. Those Words in their wonted Application, always marked out to his Mind Bodies, or folid Things which were perceived by the Refistance they gave: But there is no Solidity, no Resistance or Protrusion perceived by Sight. In short, the Ideas of Sight are all new Perceptions, to which there be no Names annexed in his Mind: Morion.

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Mind: he cannot, therefore understand what is said to him concerning them; And to ask of the two Bodies he saw placed on the Table, which was the Sphere, which the Cube? were, to him, a Question downright bantering and unintelligible; nothing he sees being able to suggest to his Thoughts, the Idea of Body, Distance, or in general, of any thing he had already known.

CXXXVI. It is a Mistake, to think the same thing affects both Sight and Touch. If the same Angle or Square, which is the Object of Touch, be also the Object of Vision, what should hinder the blind Man, at first Sight, from knowing it? For though the Manner wherein it affects the Sight, be different from that wherein it affected his Touch; yet, there being, beside this Manner or Circumstance, which is new and unknown, the Angle or Figure, which is old and known, he cannot choose but discern it.

fion having been demonstrated to be of a nature, intirely different and heterogeneous from tangible Figure and Extension, it remains that we inquire concerning Motion.

Motion. Now that visible Motion is not of the fame fort with tangible Motion, feems to need no farther Proof, it being an evident Corollary from what we have shewn concerning the Difference there is between visible and tangible Extension: But for a more full and express Proof hereof, we need only observe, that one who had not yet experienced Vision, would not at first fight know Motion. Whence it clearly follows, that Motion perceivable by Sight is of a fort distinct from Motion perceivable by Touch. The Antecedent I prove thus: By Touch he could not perceive any Motion, but what was up or down, to the right or left, nearer or farther from him; besides these, and their feveral Varieties or Complications, it is impossible he should have any Idea of Motion. He would not therefore think any thing to be Motion, or give the name Motion to any Idea, which he could not range under some or other of those particular kinds thereof. But from Sect. XCV. it is riain that by the meer act of Vision, he could not know Motion upwards or downwards, to the right or left, or in any other possible Direction. From which I conclude, he would not know Motion at all at first fight. As for the Idea

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Idea of Motion in Abstract, I shall not waste Paper about it, but leave it to my Reader, to make the best he can of it. To me it is perfectly unintelligible.

thewn concerning the Different CXXXVIII. The Confideration of Motion may furnish a new Field for Inquiry: But fince the Manner wherein the Mind apprehends by Sight, the Motion of tangible Objects, with the various Degrees thereof, may be eafily collected, from what hath been faid concerning the Manner, wherein that Sense doth suggest their various Distances, Magnitudes and Situations; I shall not enlarge any farther on this Subject; but proceed to confider what may be alledged with greatest appearance of Reafon, against the Proposition we have shewn to be true: For where there is fo much Prejudice to be encountered, a bare and naked Demonstration of the Truth will scarce suffice. We must also satisfy the Scruples that Men may raise in favour of their preconceived Notions, shew whence the Mistake arises, how it came to fpread, and carefully disclose and root out those false Persuasions, that an early Prejudice might have implanted in the which I conclude be while he

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CXXXIX. First. Therefore, it will be demanded, how visible Extension and Figures come to be called by the fame Name, with tangible Extention and Figures, if they are not of the same kind with them? It must be something more than Humour or Accident, that could occasion a Custom so constant and universal as this, which has obtained in all Ages and Nations of the World, and amongst all Ranks of Men, the Learned as well as the Illiterate.

CXL. To which I answer, we can no more argue a visible and tangible Square to be of the same species, from their being called by the same Name, than we can, that a tangible Square and the Monofyllable confifting of fix Letters, whereby it is marked, are of the fame Species because they are both called by the same Name. It is customary to call written Words, and the Things they fignify, by the fame Name: For Words not being regarded in their own Nature, or otherwife than as they are Marks of Things, it had been superfluous, and beside the defign of Language, to have given them Names distinct from those of the Things marked by them. The same Reason holds being.

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here also. Visible Figures are the Marks of tangible Figures, and from Sect. LIX. it is plain, that in themselves they are little regarded, or upon any other Score than for their Connexion with tangible Figures, which by Nature they are ordained to signify. And because this Language of Nature doth not vary in different Ages or Nations, hence it is, that in all Times and Places, visible Figures are called by the same Names, as the respective tangible Figures suggested by them, and not because they are alike, or of the same sort with them.

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more ergue a visible and tangible CXLI. But, fay you, furely a tangible Square is liker to a visible Square, than to a visible Circle: It has four Angles, and as many Sides: fo also has the visible Square: but the visible Circle has no such thing, being bounded by one uniform Curve, without right Lines or Angles, which makes it unfit to represent the tangible Square, but very fit to represent the tangible Circle. Whence it clearly follows, that visible Figures are Patterns of, or of the same Species with the respective tangible Figures represented by them: that they are like unto them, and of their own Nature fitted to represent them, as being orsel.

A NEW THEORY

being of the fame fort: and that they are in no respect arbitrary Signs, as Words.

CXLII. I answer, it must be acknowledged, the visible Square is fitter than the visible Circle, to represent the tangible Square, but then it is not because it is liker, or more of a Species with it; but because the visible Square contains in it several distinct Parts, whereby to mark the feveral distinct, corresponding Parts of a tangible Square, whereas the vifible Circle doth not. The Square perceived by Touch, hath four distinct, equal Sides, so also hath it four distinct, equal Angles. It is therefore necessary, that the visible Figure which shall be most proper to mark it, contain four distinct equal Parts corresponding to the four Sides of the tangible Square; as likewise four other di-Rinct and equal Parts, whereby to denote the four equal Angles of the tangible Square. And accordingly we see the vifible Figures contain in them distinct vifible Parts, answering to the distinct tangible Parts of the Figures fignified, or suggested by them.

CXLIII. But it will not hence follow, that any visible Figure is like unto, or of the the tar the Ki ille rep far No bin ter is

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the same Species with its corresponding tangible Figure, unless it be also shewn, that not only the Number, but also the Kind of the Parts be the same in both. To illustrate this, I observe that visible Figures represent tangible Figures, much after the fame manner that written Words do Sounds. Now, in this respect, Words are not arbitrary, it not being indifferent, what written Word stands for any Sound: But it is requifite, that each Word contain in it so many distinct Characters, as there are Variations in the Sound it stands for. Thus the fingle Letter a is proper to mark one simple uniform Sound; and the word Adultery is accommodated to represent the Sound annexed to it, in the Formation whereof, there being eight different Collifions, or Modifications of the Air by the Organs of Speech, each of which produces a difference of Sound, it was fit the Word representing it should confist of as many distinct Characters, thereby to mark each particular Difference or Part of the whole Sound: And yet no Body, I presume, will fay, the fingle Letter a, or the Word Adultery are like unto, or of the same Species with the respective Sounds by them represented. It is indeed arbitrary that, in VOL II. general, Aa

general, Letters of any Language represent Sounds at all: but when that is once agreed, it is not arbitrary what Combination of Letters shall represent this or that particular Sound. I leave this with the Reader to pursue, and apply it in his own Thoughts.

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CXLIV. It must be confessed that we are not so apt to confound other Signs with the Things fignified, or to think them of the fame Species, as we are visible and tangible Ideas. 'But a little Confideration will shew us how this may be, without our supposing them of a like Nature. These Signs are constant and universal, their Connexion with tangible Ideas has been learnt at our first Entrance into the World; and ever fince, almost every Moment of our Lives, it has been occurring to our Thoughts, and fastening and striking deeper on our Minds. When we observe that Signs are variable, and of Humane Institution; when we remember, there was a time they were not connected in our Minds, with those things they now fo readily fuggest; but that their Signification was learned by the flow Steps of Experience: This preserves us from confounding founding them. But when we find the same Signs suggest the same Things all over the World; when we know they are not of Humane Institution, and cannot remember that we ever learned their Signification, but think that at first Sight they would have suggested to us the same Things they do now: All this persuades us they are of the same Species as the Things respectively represented by them, and that it is by a natural Resemblance they suggest them to our Minds.

CXLV. Add to this, that whenever we make a nice Survey of any Object, fucceffively directing the Optic Axis to each Point thereof; there are certain Lines and Figures described by the Motion of the Head or Eye, which being in truth perceived by feeling, do nevertheless so mix themselves as it were, with the Ideas of Sight, that we can scarce think but they appertain to that Sense. Again, the Ideas of Sight enter into the Mind, several at once more diffinct and unmingled, than is usual in the other Senses beside the Touch. Sounds, for example, perceived at the same Instant, are apt to coalesce, if I may so say, into one Sound: But we can perceive at the same time great va-A 2 2 riety

riety of visible Objects, very separate and distinct from each other. Now tangible Extension being made up of several distinct coexistent parts, we may hence gather another Reason, that may dispose us to imagine a Likeness or Analogy between the immediate Objects of Sight and Touch. But nothing, certainly, doth more contribute to blend and confound them together, than the strict and close Connexion they have with each other. We cannot open our Eyes, but the Ideas of Distance, Bodies, and tangible Figures are suggested by them. So fwift and fudden, and unperceived is the Transition from visible to tangible Ideas, that we can scarce forbear thinking them equally the immediate Object of Vision.

CXLVI. The Prejudice, which is grounded on these, and whatever other Causes may be assigned thereof, sticks so sast, that it is impossible without obstinate Striving, and Labour of the Mind, to get intirely clear of it. But then the Reluctancy we find, in rejecting any Opinion, can be no Argument of its Truth, to whoever considers what has been already shewn, with regard to the Pre-

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Prejudices we entertain concerning the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects; Prejudices so familiar to our Minds, so confirmed and inveterate, as they will hardly give way to the clearest Demonstration.

CXLVII. Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude, that the proper Objects of Vision constitute an uni ersal Language of the Author of Nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our Actions, in order to attain those things, that are necessary to the Preservation and Well-being of our Bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. It is by their Information that we are principally guided in all the Transactions and Concerns of Life. And the manner wherein they fignify, and mark unto us the Objects which are at a Distance, is the same with that of Languages and Signs of Humane Appointment; which do not fuggest the things fignified, by any Likeness or Identity of Nature, but only by an habitual Connexion, that Experience has made us to observe between them.

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CXLVIII. Suppose one who had always continued Blind, be told by his Guide, that after he has advanced so many Steps, he shall come to the Brink of a Precipice, or be stopt by a Wall; must not this to him feem very admirable and furprizing? He cannot conceive how it is possible for Mortals to frame fuch Predictions as these, which to him would feem as strange and unaccountable, as Prophefy doth to others. Even they who are bleffed with the vifive Faculty, may (though Familiarity make it less observed) find therein sufficient Cause of Admiration. The wonderful Art and Contrivance wherewith it is adjusted to those Ends and Purposes for which it was apparently defigned, the vast Extent, Number, and Variety of Objects that are at once with fo much Ease, and Quickness, and Pleasure suggested by it: All these afford Subject for much and pleasing Speculation, and may, if any thing, give us some Glimmering, analogous Prænotion of Things, which are placed beyond the certain Discovery and Comprehension of our present State.

CXLIX. I do not defign to trouble my felf with drawing Corollaries, from the Doctrine

Doctrine I have hitherto laid down, If it bears the Test, others may, so far as they shall think convenient, employ their Thoughts in extending it farther, and applying it to whatever Purposes it may be subservient to: Only, I cannot forbear making fome Inquiry concerning the Object of Geometry, which the Subject we have been upon doth naturally lead one to. We have shewn there is no fuch Idea as that of Extension in Abstract. and that there are two kinds of fenfible Extension and Figures, which are intirely diffinct and heterogeneous from each other. Now, it is natural to inquire which of these is the Object of Geometry.

CL. Some things there are, which at first sight incline one to think Geometry conversant about visible Extension. The constant Use of the Eyes, both in the practical and speculative Parts of that Science doth very much induce us thereto. It would, without doubt, seem odd to a Mathematician to go about to convince him, the Diagrams he saw upon Paper were not the Figures, or even the Likeness of the Figures, which make the Subject of the Demonstration. The contrary.

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trary being held an unquestionable Truth, not anly by Mathematicians, but also by those who apply themselves more particularly to the Study of Logick; I mean, who confider the Nature of Science, Certainty, and Demonstration: It being by them affigned as one Reason, of the extraordinary Clearness and Evidence of Geometry, that in this Science the Reafonings are free from those Inconveniences. which attend the Use of arbitrary Signs, the very Ideas themselves being copied out, and exposed to View upon Paper. But, by the bye, how well this agrees with what they likewise affert of abstract Ideas, being the Object of Geometrical Demonstration, I leave to be confidered.

CLI. To come to a Resolution in this Point, we need only observe what hath been said in Sect. LIX. LX. LXI. where it is shewn that visible Extensions in themselves are little regarded, and have no settled determinate Greatness, and that Men measure altogether, by the Application of tangible Extension to tangible Extension. All which makes it evident, that visible Extension and Figures are not the Object of Geometry.

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CLII. It is therefore plain that visible Figures are of the same Use in Geometry, that Words are: and the one may as well be accounted the Object of that Science, as the other; neither of them being otherwise concerned therein, than as they represent or suggest to the Mind the particular tangible Figures connected with them. There is indeed this Difference between the Signification of tangible Figures by visible Figures, and of Ideas by Words: That whereas the latter is variable and uncertain, depending altogether on the arbitrary Appointment of Men, the former is fixed, and immutably the fame in all Times and Places. A visible Square, for Instance, suggests to the Mind the same tangible Figure in Europe, that it doth in America. Hence it is that the Voice of the Author of Nature, which speaks to our Eyes, is not liable to that Misinterpretation and Ambiguity, that Languages of Humane Contrivance are unavoidably subject to.

CLIII. Though what has been faid may fuffice to shew what ought to be determined, with relation to the Object of Geometry; I shall nevertheless, for the fuller Illustration

tion thereof, confider the Case of an Intelligence, or unbodied Spirit, which is supposed to see persectly well, i. e. to have a clear Perception of the proper and immediate Objects of Sight, but to have no Sense of Touch. Whether there be any such Being in Nature or no, is beside my purpose to inquire. It sufficeth, that the Supposition contains no Contradiction in it. Let us now examine, what Proficiency such a one may be able to make in Geometry. Which Speculation will lead us more clearly to see, whether the Ideas of Sight can possibly be the Object of that Science.

foresaid Intelligence could have no Idea of a Solid, or Quantity of three Dimensions, which followeth from its not having any Idea of Distance. We indeed are prone to think, that we have by Sight the Ideas of Space and Solids, which ariseth from our imagining that we do, strictly speaking, see Distance, and some Parts of an Object at a greater Distance than others; which hath been demonstrated to be the Effect of the Experience we have had, what Ideas of Touchare connected with such and such Ideas

Ideas attending Vision: But the Intelligence here spoken of is supposed to have no Experience of Touch. He would not, therefore, judge as we do, nor have any Idea of Distance, Outness, or Profundity, nor consequently of Space or Body, either immediately or by Suggestion. Whence it is plain he can have no Notion of those Parts of Geometry, which relate to the Mensuration of Solids, and their convex or concave Surfaces, and contemplate the Properties of Lines generated by the Section of a Solid. The conceiving of any Part whereof, is beyond the Reach of his Faculties.

CLV. Farther, he cannot comprehend the Manner wherein Geometers describe a right Line or Circle; the Rule and Compass with their Use, being things of which it is impossible he should have any Notion: Nor is it an easier matter for him to conceive the placing of one Plain or Angle on another, in order to prove their Equality: Since that supposeth some Idea of Distance, or external Space. All which makes it evident, our pure Intelligence could never attain to know so much as the first Elements of plain Geometry.

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And perhaps, upon a nice Inquiry, it will be found, he cannot even have an Idea of plain Figures any more than he can of Solids; fince some Idea of Distance is necessary, to form the Idea of a Geometrical Plain, as will appear to whoever shall reflect a little on it.

CLVI. All that is properly perceived by the visive Faculty, amounts to no more than Colours with their Variations, and different Proportions of Light and Shade: But, the perpetual Mutability, and Fleetingness of those immediate Objects of Sight, render them incapable of being managed after the manner of Geometrical Figures; nor is it in any Degree useful that they should. It is true, there are divers of them perceived at once; and more of some, and less of others: But accurately to compute their Magnitude, and affign precise determinate Proportions, between things fo variable and inconstant, if we suppose it possible to be done, must yet be a very trifling and infignificant Labour.

CLVII. I must confess, Men are tempted to think that flat or plain Figures are immediate

immediateObjects of Sight, though they acknowledge Solids are not. And this Opinion is grounded on what is observed in painting, wherein (it feems) the Ideas immediately imprinted on the Mind, are only of Plains variously coloured, which by a fudden Act of the Judgment are changed into Solids: But, with a little Attention we shall find the Plains here mentioned, as the immediate Objects of Sight, are not visible but tangible Plains. For when we fay that Pictures are Plains: we mean thereby, that they appear to the Touch smooth and uniform. But then this Smoothness and Uniformity, or, in other Words, this Plainness of the Picture, is not perceived immediately by Vision: For it appeareth to the Eye various and multiform.

CLVIII. From all which we may conclude, that Plains are no more the immediate Object of Sight than Solids. What we strictly see are not Solids, nor yet Plains variously coloured: they are only diversity of Colours. And some of these suggest to the Mind Solids, and others plain Figures; just as they have been experienced to be connected with the one, or the

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the other: So that we see Plains, in the same way that we see Solids; both being equally suggested by the immediate Objects of Sight, which accordingly are themselves denominated Plains and Solids: But though they are called by the same Names, with the things marked by them, they are nevertheless of a Nature intirely different, as hath been demonstrated.

CLIX. What hath been faid is, if I mistake not, sufficient to decide the Queftion we proposed to examine, concerning the Ability of a pure Spirit, fuch as we have described; to know Geometry: It is, indeed, no easy Matter for us to enter precisely into the Thoughts of such an Intelligence; because we cannot, without great Pains, cleverly separate and difintangle in our Thoughts the proper Objects of Sight from those of Touch which are connected with them. This, indeed, in a compleat Degree, seems scarce possible to be performed: Which will not feem strange to us, if we consider how hard it is, for any one to hear the Words of his Native Language pronounced in his Ears without understanding them. Though he endeavour to difunite the Meaning from the the Sound, it will nevertheless intrude into his Thoughts, and he shall find it extreme difficult, if not impossible, to put himself exactly in the Posture of a Foreigner, that never learned the Language so as to be affected barely with the Sounds themselves, and not perceive the Signification annexed to them. By this time, I suppose, it is clear that neither Abstract, nor visible Extension makes the Object of Geometry; the not discerning of which may perhaps, have created some Difficulty and useless Labour in Mathematics.

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The County it will nevertheless inrucions his Fiscolfs, and he shall shall in the Fiscolfs, if you impussible, to gut himself exactly in the Posture of a neigher, that never learned the Language, to as to be affected barely with the Sounds themselves, and not perceive the Sanification annexed to there. By this ease, i uppuse, it is clear that neigher that neigher that neigher that neigher that neigher the Collect of Cometry, the net discribing this of Cometry, the net discribing this perhaps have created some this clear that he had added in the perhaps have created some things.

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